

# High Ideals

THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA



TOPICS MANUAL

WINTER, 1959

THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
THE LUTHER LEAGUE

## *Let your light so shine . . .*

Let your light so shine that everyone may see the light of Jesus Christ above all the many lights of our world today. There are many lights casting their beams on the lives of our young people, and many young people are blinded as to the beam which should brighten their lives.

On the other hand, there are some young people who have seen the light of Christ and have formed their life around this light.

It is these Christian young people that must take it upon themselves to enlighten the lives of the many troubled young people of our world today. This is not as easy a task as you may think. Can you imagine how hard it would have been for Christ to find followers in our busy world today, compared to that of his time? Many of us are too busy with the material things in life, to remember the great debt we owe to God through our spiritual life.

Jesus said in the New Testament "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12) Just imagine what kind of a world this would be if everyone lived by this light. But through our Luther League we have an excellent opportunity to help the young people recognize this light now.

There are many ways that this can be accomplished, but the most important essential is Christian Character. We must so influence others around us that they will see our light and let this light be their guide also.

In St. Matthew 5:16, Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Let us not fail Christ by darkening our light.

**CAROL VAN KIRK**

This theme won first prize in a contest in Florida. (See December LUTHER LIFE, page 5.)



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# WHAT DOES YOUR PASTOR EXPECT OF YOU?

by DEAN RUPE

**A**S ONE of the Luther leaguers filed out of the door following morning worship I asked, "Is everything ready for this evening?"

She replied, "Yes Pastor. We got Tom to take charge of the devotions and Mary has the topic."

"Good," I said, "See you tonight."

That evening as I sat in the room where our youth group meets, I reflected on last week's program which was next to perfect. The leader did a splendid job in presenting her program in the form of a T. V. skit. My, I thought to myself, these young people sure have it. It made me feel proud. The whole program had gone so smoothly.

Just then four of the leaguers came in. It was getting close to the time for our meeting to start.

One of the boys got out the hymnals. He asked, "I wonder if we will be using our Sunday School hymnal tonight?"

A few more leaguers came in and

started talking to the others. Time was fleeting and Tom wasn't there.

Just then Mary came running down the steps. "Pastor," she said in a huff, "what hymns would you suggest for this topic. Tom wanted me to give him suggestions last Wednesday, but I forgot."

We picked three. Tom finally came in. I said, "Tom, we'd better start, immediately. We are 15 minutes late."

"Well, Okay, Pastor, but Shirley isn't here to play the piano and Jim was to have the prayer. Where is he?"

I took the prayer for Jim and we struggled through the songs without a pianist. Tom read most of his topic which made it so boring.

After the leaguers left, I once again began to reflect. I said to myself, "We still have a long way to go, don't we?" The good meetings are like cool shade out in the middle of the desert. But the rest of the time we boil in the sun of *irresponsibility*.

Let us consider the question: *what does a pastor expect from his youth?*

The list of what is expected of youth could be made into volumes, but I doubt whether such a listing would really help. If we are to consider this topic in the hopes of initiating some real changes in our youth program or better yet in the youth themselves, then I wonder if it would not be wise to consider a different question.

Suppose we change the question to read: *what does God expect from youth?* Of course, this question only takes on real meaning when it bears directly on *your* life. Therefore, you must state the question as though it was directed to you and only you. Then it will read: *what does God expect of me?*

You do not have to be a genius, college graduate or a high school graduate to know what God expects of people. It seems that children do more of what God expects of them than most adults. Jesus placed children at the center of the world when He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God."



Jesus had twelve men who were His closest associates, but even above them He chose children as an example. In fact, the disciples were anxious to keep children from seeing Jesus. They felt Jesus should not be bothered with such unimportant matters as noisy children. How wrong they were. Jesus says, the Kingdom of God belongs to them and unless adults receive the Kingdom as little children they can not be a part of it.

God then expects me to be as a child, a child of God. "Behold, now we are the sons of God."

How does one become a child of God especially if he or she is already beyond the age of childhood? It seems that this is no new problem. Nicodemus asked this same question one dark evening centuries ago. Jesus answered him, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." In Acts, the early converts wondered what they should do now that their hearts had been moved by the witness of Peter concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Every Christian then has two birth days. One is the day he entered this world and first started to live with men. The other is the day of his baptism, when he entered the Kingdom of heaven and first began living with God. Of the two, the latter is by far the more important. The life which began at his first birth ends with death. The life which began at his second birth never ends. It lives on with God into all eternity.

What does God expect of me? Now that I am baptized or born anew and have a new name—Christian—my life takes on a new meaning.

To take the name Christian means to take up the work of following Christ. We are called to follow Christ even as the first disciples were beckoned on the shores of Galilee to take leave of their old way of life to accept a new way.

To follow Christ means to be led into the institution which He established—the Church. But if a person insists on staying outside of that fellowship, or Church, he trails far behind Christ and is in grave danger of losing sight of Him.

Christians find themselves associating with those who place Christ at the center of their living. And the Church itself has Christ as its very cornerstone. Then the Church and the fellowship are one and the same, and we are called to serve in and through His church.

Jesus not only accepted little children, but He gladly helped the leper, the blind, the lame, the poor or any person who came searching for help. He told us to do the same for in serving our neighbor we serve Him. "Inasmuch as ye have



done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

God expects me to be a responsible person, one who answers to His call to serve.

One cold night near Christmas time, a youth group planned to go caroling. Arrangements had been made well in advance for drivers, carolers and for refreshments following the visits on the shut-ins. Everyone had received their list and the cars left the church.

One driver said to the other drivers in his group, "I'll see you at the first

stop. I must get gas before I travel very far." They all agreed.

While the driver stopped for gas, one of his riders said, "Let's not go caroling. Let's go around and see the Christmas lights. After all they have enough carolers."

This set off a chain reaction and soon all but the driver was convinced to give up the caroling in favor of sight seeing. After weighing the matter somewhat, the driver gave in to the others even though his conscience told him to do otherwise.

After they traveled around to see all the pretty Christmas decorations, they returned to the church for hot cocoa. The other carolers made a few remarks but willingly accepted them to share in the refreshments.

What about this group which did not go caroling? Were they very responsible? The answer obviously is no.

Here we see a group of young people who thought more of themselves than they did of others. This is not the Christmas spirit, nor the Christian way of living. The shut-ins were neglected and the other carolers were all the weaker because the whole team wasn't out for the game.

The irresponsible like to claim the title Christian and all the benefits that are a part of this rich heritage. But they are not always willing to make an effort to contribute to the welfare of the Christian fellowship.

Under Article III—Objects of the suggested model constitution of the Luther League of America, we find that the primary purpose of this organization is to encourage our youth to respond to the love of Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour, with a deep faith and a consecrated life.

Response to the love of Christ is what God expects of all of us. This means to be a responsible being.

If you are a league officer, you are expected to be a regular attender and supporter of the total work of the youth program. If you are asked to take part in a program, whether it be the regular Sunday evening program or a Christmas play, God expects you to keep your word.

And if you fail to be prepared or even show up, you have not only mistreated your fellowmen, but more so you have hurt God. Even as we do it to one of the least of our brothers, we do it to God.

Don't be a parasite and absorb all the comfort of faith and never accept the challenge of Christian living. Be a Christian not only when things are going along without much effort, but also when things are demanded of you.

"We come to church to be comforted," a woman said in a huff to C. S. Barnett, "whereas you seem to think it proper to make us uncomfortable." This woman was upset to think that her *comfort of faith* was linked up inseparably with the *challenge of faith*. Faith without works is dead.

What does God expect of me? God expects of His children a life dedicated to His service. Are you serving where you can in your church? Are you serving where you can in your home? Are you serving where you can in your community?

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

Hymn suggestions from the C.S.B.: "A Charge to Keep I Have" (376); "Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve" (380); "How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord" (344); "Take My Life and Let It Be" (382).

Scripture suggestions: Luke 10:25-37; Matthew 25:14-30; Matt. 25:31-46.

Resource suggestions: **Put Your Faith To Work** by Karl H. A. Rest.

Questions at the end can be used as discussion starters.

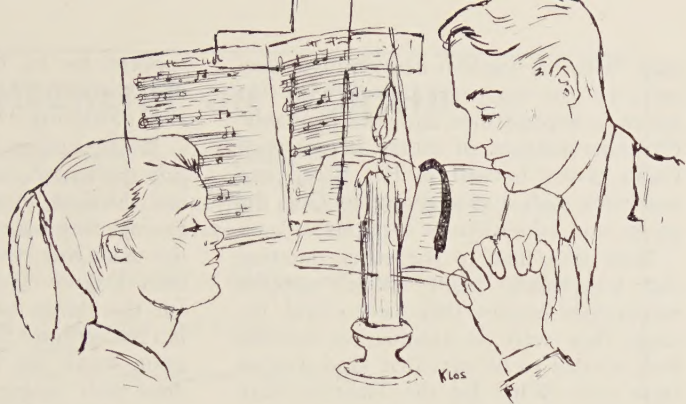
A self-analysis test could be given to each leaguer or a self-analysis test of the league could be given. Make the test short.

The pastor should be on hand to offer suggestions whereby the league could take on more service projects such as visiting shut-ins, the county home and jail. He could also suggest how to support benevolent projects of the total church program.

## DISCUSSION

What was wrong with the league meetings? How can you "become as a little child?" What should the leaguers have done or said about the lax carolers? Explain "faith without works is dead." Why is it important that a Lutheran understand this phrase?





## *Is Our Worship for Real?*

*this topic, answers questions:  
whom do we worship?  
why do we worship?  
how do we worship?*

by DORIS ABERNETHY

**I**F you were asked why you eat, you'd immediately answer, "I'm hungry." If you were asked why you have a particular friend, you might explain the qualities that you admire in him. The reasons that we do things are important even though we don't often stop to think about it.

*(Take a few minutes for each member to write down simple answers to the following questions: what is worship? why do we worship? Discuss the answers that are given on "what is worship." Having looked up "worship" in a dictionary and Bible dictionary, follow the discussion with this further resource.)*

The word worship comes from the combination of "worth" and "ship"—"worthship" or ascribing worth or value to someone or something. Worship is

giving reverence or respect to someone or something higher. If you had lived thousands of years ago when man was young, some sociologists say that you, like all men, would have recognized and worshipped the One True God. You would need to progress only a short distance to come upon man worshipping at the feet of a god resembling a man with the head of an eagle, Marduk (war god of the Babylonians), or any of the various gods built by men for worship.

*(Report of project 2)*

While others worshipped gods of various kinds, some were faithful recognizing a power beyond anything in earth who had created and made all life and being. Today as then, when man looks at the world he sees so much power that he almost always seeks someone to wor-

ship. Whether modern or primitive, man bows to give honor and respect to that which is beyond him and unexplainable. Christian worship, of course, begins with God's giving himself in His Word and continues with man's giving to God the praise and adoration as a response.

Now let's turn to the other question that was asked. Many ancient peoples worshipped because they were afraid, because they were in trouble, or because they wanted to be sure that God was on their side. Why did the Hebrews turn to God with the first fruits of their harvest and herd? They thought he was worth all the honor they could bring. Why was David so sorrowful about taking both a man's life and his wife. Because of the perfection and holiness of God, he realized his sin. Why did a group of Christians huddle in underground caves to praise God and to hear His Word? Because they believed that Christ was worthy of praise and sacrifices, even their lives. And now why do we worship?

*(Report of project 1. Discussion of the written answers of the group.)*

We worship because we know that God is all powerful, that He has made and cares for all of life and not only this world, but the whole universe. If it were only in fear of His power, we could bow in humble praise before His might. But Christian worship is more than praise of a supreme power. Our God not only has unlimited power, but He has shown himself as a loving Father, loving us beyond our understanding. Jesus' life, Jesus' death, and Jesus' resurrection point us to the God that Jesus was telling about in the parable of the prodigal son. The father, whom the son left to waste his life and possessions, stood waiting and watching for the return of his son. Such concern for us makes us drop to our knees in adoration and love of God. Is it because knowing the power and love of God we love him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind that we worship?

When we realize who it is we worship, when we stop to consider with Job the greatness of our God and in Jesus his

concern for us, then we realize how far our worship is from actually praising and glorifying Him.

When Luther League worship is sloppily presented, ill-prepared, and jerkily run through, then it is *not worship*. On the opening bars of "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation," is each leaguer singing praise and thank for the things of God's creation? Or is it a background for chatter before the program starts. As the offering is received, does your league use the time to think about dedicating anew every area of his life, as well as the money offering with a prayer that God will use him?

*(Perhaps this is the point for a wrong-way skit which has been used effectively by caravan teams. You'll find it easy to help a group of young people (6 or 7) take their places at an unprepared Luther League worship. The leader is late, rummages through the book for a hymn and short scripture. The pianist has never seen the hymns and plays as though she never saw a piano before. The scriptures are background for the whispering of a romantically attached couple and the giggling intermediates behind them. Everybody insists that they have no time for the last hymn. Your own league failings can provide good ideas for the skit. Following the skit, divide your group into small groups of 5 or 6 and appoint a secretary to write and report suggesting as many ways of improvement as possible. As they report formulate helps on the blackboard under the title "Suggestions in Planning Worship.")*

*(As an alternate to this suggestion use buzz groups to discuss the last four worship services of your Luther League. Give them as much as possible to help them remember the services and ask for helpful, constructive criticism again reporting back to the group and making a list of "Suggestions in Planning Worship.")*

Leaders of worship should approach their task with a sense of responsibility for a farce of worship shows disrespect and contempt for God. Each hymn has a complete thought and is really a prayer of praise for our God. When we sing the



# CHECKLIST ON WORSHIP

## General

- Worship definitely planned 2 weeks ahead—*
- Parts of worship given out 1 or 2 weeks ahead—*
- Leaguers conduct themselves in worship knowing that God is present—*
- Standing and sitting is done quietly and reverently—*
- Pianist—prepared and early—*
- Usbers—instructed as to the time of offering and importance of reverence—*

## Hymns

- First hymn one of adoration and praise—*
- New hymns are used—*
- Hymns fit the theme of the scripture and prayer—*
- All leaguers sing—*
- Backgrounds and explanations of hymns are used—*

## Prayer

- Collects from hymnals—*
- Free prayers by leaguers—*
- Litanies—*
- Sentence prayer—*
- Hymns used as prayers—*
- Silent prayer—*
- Prayers from the Bible—*
- Guided prayers—*

## Scripture

- Gives the theme of worship—*
- Responsive reading—*
- Antiphonal reading (2 groups of people alternate, division of sides of room or men and women)—*
- Unison reading—*
- Choral reading—*
- Bible passage is simple enough to be understood or else it is explained—*
- Reading of scripture is slow, clear, and loud enough—*

## Offering

- Absolute silence is maintained—*
- Prayers of silent dedication for leaguers are written and distributed—*
- Giving of self and offering is part of the worship—*
- Soft music is played—*
- Words of offertory in The Service are used ("Create in me . . .")—*

## Meditations or talks

- Brief worship thought is prepared from one's own experience and a Bible passage—*
- Story of religious significance is told—*
- Other devotional material is used—*

hymns lightly without thinking and when we talk while the Bible is being read, we are saying that we do not believe that God is worthy of our praise, our reverence and worship, and the devotions become real sin on our part.

Irreverence for the things of God is shown in other ways besides talking or laughing during the worship. When a leaguer stands up to stumble through God's Word, when a little effort could

have made the reading clear, he is irreverent. When the program leader waits until five minutes, one hour, or even the day before to choose the theme, plan the worship, and notify participants, he is irreverent. When worship becomes meaningless because no effort is made to vary the expressions of worship in a Luther League, even that shows a lack of understanding of the worth and holiness of God.

Let's turn now to our checklist for some positive elements to be used in our worship planning. Put numbers beside them to show how often you use these ideas: Often—3, Sometimes—2, Seldom—1, Never—0.

*(See checklist on page 7.)*

*(Perhaps from a discussion of the checklist and the additions to your suggestions in Planning Worship from the check list a good outline can be presented on the blackboard summarizing the program thus far.)*

In steps for planning a worship service these are merely suggestions from which you may begin. *(There can be much elaboration on each point.)*

1. A prayer for God's guidance in the planning of worship provides the best place to begin. At the same time that you pray make sure that you are beginning early enough to plan a worship pleasing to God.

2. Selecting a particular theme for worship according to the season, the program or a particular need of your Luther League is an important step.

3. Selection of a scripture passage (or several) which speaks God's Word on the theme makes a good starting.

4. Next let's choose a number of hymns, prayers, and other materials which are related, so that we can choose the best.

5. Then decide upon the particular hymns you will use, as well as preludes, prayers and other material. Be sure that soft music of organ, piano, or recording set a worshipful tone and is not just something to show that the service is starting. See what order the different elements should take and how each part of the service is to be presented.

6. Choose the place and arrangement of the worship deciding what visual aids or seating arrangements are most desirable. A simple altar can add much to a worshipful experience.

7. All other planning is in vain if this step is omitted or not carried through. Parts must be assigned and each individual must know exactly what he is expected to do and at what time. There is

nothing so distracting in worship as one in which no one seems to know what will happen next. The leader should go over their parts and responsibilities with all participants, as well as explain the theme and order of worship itself. None as has been suggested previously should this be a last minute affair of a day or so ahead.

8. Finally, let all those who are helping in a particular service be prepared to lead by coming at least 15 minutes early to allow time to catch their breaths, as well as to get in the proper spirit for leading reverently.

If you know whom it is you're worshipping, if you've evaluated some of your previous worship experiences, and if you've an idea of where to begin in planning, then you're ready to know where the worship materials are to be found.

Our greatest resource for worship is the Bible. Filled with various forms of worship, we have only to consult a concordance to find any word or idea discussed in the Bible. The Bible is filled with praise, adoration, prayers of repentance and guilt, expressions of joy, cries for help, plus stories of men whose lives had God as their center. The psalms, the songs of various people in the Bible, and the prayers furnish wonderful forms of expression for the same thoughts we feel today.

The next greatest resource for worship is our hymnal. The musical settings of scripture used in the various services of our church are appropriate in our worship at Luther League. Psalm paraphrases are listed in the new hymnal immediately before the hymns, so that we can tell which hymns come from which psalms. The offertory mentioned before is particularly appropriate if explained and understood by the young people. The *Te Deum* of the Matins service is usable as an opening hymn. The *Nunc Dimittis* provides an excellent closing for an experience of worship. The Litany is a unique worship expression of concern for the whole world. The three Suffrages are excellent suggestions of forms which in-



clude responses and prayers regularly used by our church. Is it necessary to note the new hymnal's fine selection of new hymns? A worship built around "Thine Is the Glory" for the Easter Season or Ascension, is only one of the many additions that can be made to our worship through the new hymnal.

Many Luther Leagues have found the *Christian Youth Hymnal* of great value in planning worship. In addition to the variety of hymns that young people like to sing are fine worship helps. In "On Leading Worship," you find a complete discussion on how to plan and lead worship. Various order of worship for particular times are suggested as well as musical responses, psalms, prayers, worship vocabulary, scriptural background of hymns. The index of Topics provides hymn, psalm and scriptural suggestions.

With so much in our Bible and hymnal one wonders if other resources are neces-

sary. For variety, but with care that worship is not an entertainment of stories and poem, but real praise and adoration, the following books can be used: *Christ and the Fine Arts* by Cynthia P. Maus has poems, picture interpretations, hymns stories, and other stories. *Worship Resources for the Christian Year* includes prayers, poems, and meditation material. Margaret T. Applegarth's *Right Here, Right Now* has variety in drama and stories which require much preparation, but can be effective. *A Diary of Readings* compiled by John Baille has some very usable meditations for worship.

There are numbers of devotional books and services which are good, but choosing hymns, scripture and prayers which show our praise, trust, sorrow at wrongdoing and combining these in simplicity provide the very best way of leading our Luther League members into fellowship with God in worship.

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## PRESENTATION POINTERS

The purpose of this program is to guide intermediates in thinking through what worship is, to whom it is directed, and what some of the practical necessities in effective worship planning are. The procedure has been to write ideas interspersed with suggestions for the use of discussion, groups, reports, and a checklist in the program. Using those methods most helpful the leader may divide the written topic material into three parts: (1) What is worship? Why do we worship? (2) What is wrong sometimes in worship? (3) How can we plan real worship experiences?

Perhaps the most important part of this program will be a real worship at the beginning. The leader in worship should study the whole topic and plan ahead to give an excellent example of real worship in the devotional part of the program.

## THINGS TO DO

**Previous to program:** 1. Interview a cross section of your Luther League and get their general reaction to the worship in your L. L. trying to determine whether they really praise God and feel it is important, as well as why they worship. Report these findings at the program. 2. Ask various people to look up short, short reports in an encyclopedia of various gods

which people have worshipped as Marduk, Kali, Jupiter, Buddha, Mithra, to contrast with the True God.

**After the program:** 3. Mimeograph copies of "Suggestions for Planning Worship" which you work out and the results of your checklist to suggest variety and to be distributed to each worship leader throughout the year. 4. Make a file of worship suggestions used in your Luther League that were especially good, for future reference. 5. Plan to purchase some outside resources for worship for the use of your Luther League, if you do not already have them.

**Hints for the leader:** 1. have all leaders in worship and program come early, 2. assign projects 1 and 2 to a leaguer, 3. assign topic material far ahead of time, 4. mimeograph checklists, 5. gather pencils and paper.

## WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

Numerous hymns can be used effectively: "Holy God We Praise Thy Name," "Now Thank We All Our God," "All Creatures of Our God and King."

Scripture: Psalm 96:1-6; Colossians 3:16-17.

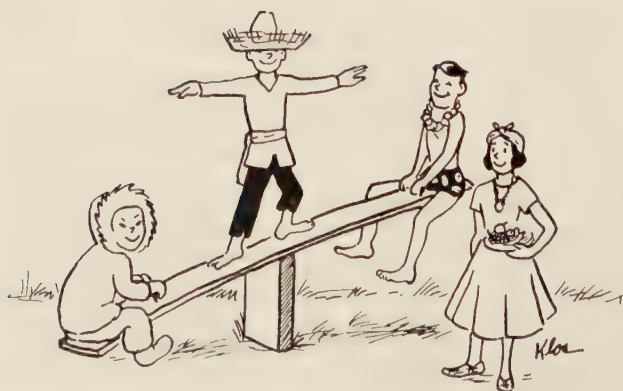
Second Hymn: "Lord With Glowing Heart I'd Praise Thee," "Ye Servants of God Your Master Proclaim," "O For a Heart to Praise My God."

Prayer: Christian Youth Hymnal—p. 366, prayer 26; Service Book and Hymnal—p. 233, prayer 116; Common Service Book—p. 144, prayer 58.

# North American Neighbors In the ULCA

*CME theme  
from ULCA viewpoint*

by JOYCE JOHNSON



OUR Church in the countries near us. The Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and our new state, Alaska. Do these places sort of give rise in you to a feeling of excitement, adventure, and travel? We hear a lot about them, but most of the time we probably let it go in one ear and out the other. We don't really know very much about what these spots are like, what the people are like, what problems they face, or what the Church is doing in these areas. Since I'm sure most of you like to travel, let's take ourselves on an imaginary trip to these places and see if we can find the answers to some of the questions we have.

## Puerto Rico

We board our plane in New York and from there fly to San Juan, the capital city of Puerto Rico. Our trip takes us over 1500 miles across the Atlantic to the island of Puerto Rico. It is one island of the West Indies Group. The island has an area of 3,435 square miles, most of which is mountainous.

One of the biggest problems facing the country is that of a very large population—611 per square mile. Because the island is so limited in natural resources it means that many of these people are unemployed. This in turn causes social and economic problems. The small farms we see in our trips around the island don't bring in much income for the families. They usually provide just enough food for the family. There are many sugar cane plantations but wages paid to the workers are quite low.

Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States. Her people are American citizens but they cannot vote in national elections. They have a representative in Congress and the person has voice but no vote. As citizens, however, young men are subject



to the draft, just as our boys in the States are. Since 1947, Puerto Ricans have been able to elect their own governor. And this governor appoints all the heads of the departments of the government. The Puerto Ricans also elect their own legislature, which has a Senate and House of Representatives as our states do.

The young people of Puerto Rico are very much like you and I. They are concerned about many of the things we are. However, they face some problems that we don't consider very much. Although these young people are anxious to get an education, 50% of them cannot go to school. There just aren't enough schools and teachers. There is also much more disease in Puerto Rico than in the States.

A lack of the proper food and poor living conditions are part of the cause for this. More doctors and nurses are needed.

These young people are the same as those everywhere. They want their families to have the things money can buy. They need fun and friends. And they want and need faith.

The Church has been active in Puerto Rico for many years. Its activity has been directed toward winning the many unchurched. About 20% of the people are active Roman Catholics and about 20% are active Protestants. There has been a steady growth of Lutheran churches on the island. In 1952 the Caribbean Evangelical Lutheran Synod was formed. This is a constituent synod of the United Lutheran Church just as yours is.

As we visit Puerto Nuevo, a suburb of San Juan, we see the new building of Redeemer Lutheran Church. It is one of the 14 Lutheran congregations in Puerto Rico. This church is of special interest to us, because we helped to build it. In 1953-55 the Luther League of America gave \$27,000 to the construction of this church.

While we are here let's visit a Luther League meeting at Redeemer Church. This league is a part of the Luther League of America just as we are, and takes an active part in its program. We would feel

very much at home worshipping with the congregation. We could attend Sunday School, worship services, sing in the choir, and take part in the Luther League.

## The Virgin Islands

We board our plane again and from San Juan fly to Charlotte Amalie, the capitol city of the Virgin Islands. The three main islands are St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John. Charlotte Amalie is located on St. Thomas. All these islands are very small. St. Croix, the largest, has an area of 82 square miles. The Virgin Islands originally belonged to Denmark, and we can see this Danish influence yet. We didn't expect to see Scandinavian influence in these tropical islands! Most of the people are Negroes whose language is English. We find that agriculture and commerce are the chief means of support of the people.

Protestants outnumber the Roman Catholics on the islands, although the Catholics form the largest single denomination. The leading Protestant groups are Episcopal, Moravian, Lutheran, and Methodist. Our United Lutheran Churches on the islands also belong to the Caribbean Synod. There are few unchurched people on the islands. The main task of the Church is to enrich and intensify the spiritual life of the people.

During the summers of 1957 and 1958 the Luther League of America conducted work camps in the Virgin Islands. We can visit the churches these leaguers worked at. One leaguer who participated in the 1957 work camp, Carol Jacobsen from Minneapolis, Minnesota, returned to the islands to work. She is employed by the Board of American Missions as matron in the Queen Louise Home. The Queen Louise Home is the only home currently providing sheltered care for children. There are about 30 small children given sheltered care. Many others are cared for in the day nursery.

## Hawaii

Our stay in the Caribbean has come to a close, and we continue our trip by going to Hawaii. This "island paradise"

is also a territory of the United States. Its government and status are very similar to that of Puerto Rico.

Hawaii first came into importance as a military outpost. At Pearl Harbor, near Honolulu, the Navy operates a large naval station. But Hawaii is becoming important on its own and awaits statehood.

We can see that Hawaii has a mixed population. A few are pure Hawaiians, and the rest are Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Portuguese, Puerto Rican, Spanish, Korean, American and other Caucasians. There is probably no other place in the world where so many different peoples live in such a small area. Tourist trade has become very important economically.

Our United Lutheran churches in Hawaii are a part of the Pacific Synod. The first church to apply for admission into the Synod was the German Church in Honolulu. This was the strongest Lutheran congregation in the islands. In 1948 a missionary was assigned to the Lihue congregation on the island of Kauai. He found great support from the people and the church has grown. Sunday schools and vacation Bible schools are now conducted in other villages on the island. In 1950 the Lutheran Church of Pearl Harbor was established. As mission congregations in the States do, the congregation had to find a temporary building to hold services in. A Navy quonset warehouse became their chapel.

From Pearl Harbor we visit a suburb of Honolulu, Kaimuki. Here, at St. Paul's Church, we find another mission project of the Luther League of America. In 1950-51 leaguers contributed \$27,000 to help the church obtain a building of its own. At St. Paul's, as at the other congregations, we find an active Luther League.

In the summer of 1957 Luther League of America caravanners visited Hawaii to help the leagues with their programs. At the LLA convention in Michigan in 1955, Hawaii had its delegates also. These young people are active in the life of their church. In the summer many of them teach in vacation Bible schools. While in Hawaii we can visit the synod's

Bible camp, Kakee, on the island of Kauai.

Whereas there was one active Lutheran Congregation in 1946, now there are four. There are several other preaching points.

## Alaska

Put away your bathing suits and get out your wool jackets. We are heading for "The Ice Box." The final stop on our imaginary trip is Alaska, our 49th state. We may still be able to get in on some of the celebration of statehood.

In 1867 the United States bought Alaska from Russia. We have all heard of the dispute over the purchase. People called it "Seward's Folly" and "Seward's Icebox." But time has proven these people wrong. Alaska has great wealth in natural resources, including fisheries and minerals. And we're really wrong about calling it "the Icebox." Except for the northern plateau, most of the state is like any midwestern state. Alaska is the fastest growing area in the United States.

We can travel most any place by car. Many roads are being built throughout all parts of the state. But the airplane is the thing in Alaska. Besides several scheduled airlines from the States, pilots fly to almost any area in Alaska. We can still get a ride in a dog sled, however. In many parts of Alaska the dog sled will never be replaced.

Along with industrial growth, we find that Alaska is fast becoming a tourist attraction. People are drawn by the beautiful scenery here. The cost of living is high, but wages have not quite kept up.

Although it seems strange, Lutheran missionary work began in Alaska by a missionary sent there to train the Eskimos in reindeer husbandry. This was in 1894. Lutherans have always been important in the history of Alaska. When the United States bought Alaska, a small portion of land was set aside in Sitka to be used by the Lutherans. But until 1913, not much work was done by the church except with the Eskimos.

Today there are Lutheran Churches in thirteen cities and villages. Our United



Lutheran Church in America has congregations in Juneau and Sitka. As we attend church here, we find the same Service as we are used to at home. We will find many well informed church members. We will find an active congregational life. The church has made progress here, but there is still much to be done.

## Home Again

So our imaginary trip comes to an end. We have been many places and have seen many things. Will they be memories that will fade with time? Or will they become a vital concern for us?

The people we have visited are very much like ourselves. They worship the way we do and participate in the same church activities we do. But these people also have many problems. They look to the Church for help. If the Church is to fulfill its obligations, it must take a vital concern in all these people.

As members of the Church it becomes our obligation too. "But what can I do?" you ask. Are you thinking of being a doctor, nurse, teacher, or minister? You could serve in these and many other occupations in any of the places we have been to. We can pray for these people. We can take a vital interest in them—but not an interest arising from pity. We can give financial aid through the missionary work of the Church. There is much we can do if we look around to find it. We are one in God with these people, and people of all parts of the world. Let's try to know and understand them better.

As the youth of today and the Church of tomorrow, we cannot forget our God-given responsibility to all peoples.

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

The purpose of this article is to provide you with resource material on Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Hawaii, and Alaska. This follows the current home mission study theme of "North American Neighbors." Make use of other sources for additional information. The material here is to be used as information, not to be read as is.

As a setting, obtain travel posters and pictures of these places. Have a large map of North America with strings running from your area to these places. Have four leaguers pre-

pare talks from the material given. These should be well prepared and in their own words. Or have a speaker or two speak on the different areas. You might be able to obtain slides to show with the talks. You could prepare an imaginary trip, giving each leaguer a plane ticket, arranging the chairs like the seats on a plane, and maybe serve refreshments during the flight. After the trip, when the information has been presented, the group could be divided in four smaller groups. Each group would then discuss two or three prepared questions, one group covering one of the four places visited.

## WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

**Setting:** large map of North America with a wooden cross in front of it. Arrange either a spotlight or candles so that the light casts a shadow of the cross on the map.

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** Now, therefore, we are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

**HYMNS:** "In Christ There Is No East or West," "The Church's One Foundation," "Jesus Shall Reign," or "Oh Zion Haste."

**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 41:1-6 or Ephesians 2:13-22.

**PRAYER:** Grant us, O Lord, a deepening appreciation of those things that make a national culture and a people. Help us to yield our own traditions so that we may be receptive to the needs of others. Forgive us our self-righteousness and our feelings of superiority toward other people. Teach us how to be good neighbors. Grant that we may join the community of believers everywhere and help us to serve Thee through a more generous sharing of our lives with others. Open our eyes to need. Inspire our hearts to service. And use us in any way Thou would. In Jesus Name and for His sake. Amen.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

"Our Church in Hawaii"—a pamphlet available from the Board of American Missions. Free.

"Facts on the West Indies"—another pamphlet available from the Board of American Missions. In quantity, free.

"Their Wealth is People"—a pamphlet on the church in Puerto Rico available from the Luther League of America. Free, in quantity.

What? a book on North American Youth. 75 cents from the United Lutheran Church Women.

Former and present issues of *Luther Life*. October 1958 for instance. Not available from LLA.

# WHAT IS A MISSIONARY?



by JOSEPHINE DARMSTAETTER

the ULCW candidate secretary  
tells about missionaries

**W**HAT is a missionary? Webster defines missionary as follows: "Of or pertaining to missions; engaged in, or devoted to missions, especially church missions; as, a missionary society; missionary zeal. . . . One sent on a mission; now, especially one sent to propagate religion."

Today we hear about persons being sent on military or industrial missions. We also know that Communists, Buddhists, Moslems, etc. are sending missionaries into all parts of the world. Therefore, when we speak of the missionaries of our church, we should add the word Christian.

In its broadest sense, a Christian missionary is anyone who witnesses in word and deed to Jesus Christ and the free gift of salvation we have through His supreme sacrifice. However, there are, of necessity, those who are employed by the church to minister to the varying needs of people at home and abroad in the name of Christ.

It is the ULCA missionaries serving overseas about whom we wish to learn today. We cannot learn in this brief time the names of the more than 250 missionaries who are serving in African, Asiatic, and South American churches which are affiliated with our ULCA. But it is our plan to learn something about the general areas of work in which they are engaged and how they prepared for their jobs as well as how they like what they are doing.

## Educational Missionaries

Missionaries often find that the minds of people must be trained if they are to be able to read and understand the Scriptures for themselves. So, educational work of one kind or another is carried on by ULCA missionaries in all parts of the world.

In Japan, women missionaries supervise the work of Japanese kindergarten teachers who are employed as teachers in the kindergartens which are a part of almost every Lutheran parish. On the high school level, there are teachers of English serving



- Aims:**
1. To learn what a missionary is
  2. To learn where missionaries are needed and what their tasks are
  3. To learn the qualifications and preparation needed by missionaries.
- 

ing in Japan; teachers of academic subjects in Lutheran Training Institute in Liberia; supervisors and administrators serving schools in India and Liberia. In British Guiana, the Argentine, Malaya, India, Liberia, missionaries are helping to train evangelists, pastors and parish workers by teaching in Bible Training Schools and theological seminaries. Some specialists could be used in fields such as home economics and library science.

Educational missionaries must have a college degree in education plus some practical experience in their profession. If they are to be engaged in a specialized field of work, they should do graduate study in their field of specialization.

### Medical Missionaries

In the field of medicine, missionaries are serving as doctors and nurses in Liberia, India, and Malaya. Doctors do general practice and frequently serve as hospital administrators. A few nurses do general hospital nursing. Others are teachers and supervisors in nurses' training schools. A number do dispensary, clinical, and public health work.

Adequate professional training according to standards set in the U.S.A. and Canada is needed by all doctors and nurses. Professional experience is an additional training requirement.

### Social Workers

Several women missionaries in Japan have developed an extensive social service type of work which includes old folks' homes, orphanages, day nurseries, a hostel for blind and deaf children. In India, missionaries have developed a program known as industrial work which has ministered to the needs of the crippled, blind, deaf and destitute.

A B.A. degree plus a master's degree from a school of social work are the basic requirements for those who would serve overseas in the field of social work. Again

some practical professional experience is important.

### Evangelistic Missionaries

Evangelism is the primary task of Christian missions everywhere. Therefore, there are pastors and parish workers or other kinds of women evangelistic workers serving wherever the ULCA is doing missionary work, namely, British Guiana, the Argentine, Uruguay, Liberia, India, Malaya, Hong Kong, Japan.

Basic preparation for missionary pastors is a B.A. degree plus a B.D. degree from a Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Women evangelistic workers should have a B.A. degree. A major in education is perhaps the most helpful undergraduate specialty for this kind of worker. Graduate study in religious education plus some practical professional experience would be most valuable.

### General Qualifications for Missionaries

In addition to professional training and experience, every missionary candidate must take a year of graduate study at the School of Missions, Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, Maywood, Illinois.

A year or more of language study is required wherever a language other than English is spoken. This study is done after arriving at the field of service. For personal qualifications see the list printed in "A Church Career Abroad."

### How to Get a Position

1. Get professional training and experience.

2. Boys write for application blanks to the Candidate Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, 231 Madison Ave., New York 16. Girls write for application blanks to the Candidate Secretary,

United Lutheran Church Women, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia 29, Pa.

3. Candidate secretaries will direct applicant in getting a health survey and interviews with the proper persons.

## Advantages and Disadvantages

A listing of these is found in "A Church Career Abroad."

## Future in Missionary Service

Missionaries will be needed as long as there are people who have not heard about and accepted the Christian faith. However, there may be a shifting of responsibilities and a change in the places where missionaries serve. As leadership is developed within the national churches overseas, missionaries can move from their positions and go on to pioneer in new and undeveloped areas.

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

**Plan 1.** Before meeting time prepare slips of paper to be given to each leaguer. At the top of each paper write the question, "What is a missionary?" Leave space for an answer. Below this, on one-half of the slips, write the following questions: 1. What kind of work do you do? 2. In what countries is this kind of work being done by ULCA missionaries? 3. What training did you have for this work? 4. How did you get your job? 5. What are the advantages of your work? The disadvantages? 6. Is there any chance for advancement in your job?

On the remaining slips of paper write the information about various types of missionaries as found in the topic material, using one slip for each of the kinds of missionaries.

When the meeting begins, give each leaguer one of the prepared slips of paper and a pencil. Explain that each is to write the answer to the first question on the paper. Then, each who has a list of questions is to find someone who has a description of a missionary on his slip. The interviewer asks his questions to which the other person replies using the information supplied on his slip. They then exchange papers and the "new" interviewer goes in search of another missionary to interview.

Allow leaguers to interview each other for about ten or fifteen minutes and then call them back to their places for a general discussion. The leader first asks each leaguer to read the definition of a missionary which he finds on the

slip of paper now in his hands. The leader then gives the ideas found in the topic material on "What a Missionary is." While the leaguers have been interviewing each other, the leader has been writing these headings on a blackboard: Where ULCA missionaries are serving; Kinds of missionary work missionaries do; Qualifications and training of missionaries; Advantages of missionary work; Disadvantage of missionary work.

The leader, during the discussion period, asks leaguers to fill in the outline using the information learned during their interviews.

**Plan 2.** The information about missionaries found in the topic material can be given to a number of leaguers in advance of the meeting date. A "roving" reporter can ask the questions as outlined in Plan 1 at the meeting. The general discussion would follow the procedure outlined in Plan 1.

**Plan 3.** The topic material could be presented in the form of a "What's My Line?" program.

**Plan 4.** Prepare a 'resource' table on which are placed copies of "The Foreign Missionary," "Lutheran Woman's Work," "The Lutheran," "Prepare to Serve," and "A Church Career Abroad."

Give each leaguer a pencil and a blank sheet of paper and ask him to find answers (from the resource materials) to the questions listed in Plan 1. After about fifteen minutes, conduct a general discussion as in Plan 1.

Resource materials: "A Church Career Abroad," "Prepare to Serve" (these leaflets can be secured for the price of the postage from ULCW, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia 29, Pa.)

Copies of "The Foreign Missionary," "Lutheran Woman's Work," and "The Lutheran."

## WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

### HYMN

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES** (each to be read by a different leaguer): Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 5:41-42; Isaiah 61:1-2; Romans 10:13-15.

### DIRECTED PRAYER—

Let us pray for the missionaries who are serving in all parts of the world. . . .

Let us pray for the national leaders of the churches in British Guiana, Argentina, Liberia, India, Hong Kong, Japan. . . .

Let us pray for those young people who are studying at the School of Missions. . . .

Let us pray that other young people will be led to enter into the missionary work of our church in order that the Gospel may continue to be spread into all parts of the world. . . .

And now, let us pray together the perfect prayer given to us by Christ:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN



# Series of Bible Studies-1 John

by GUSTAVE WEDEMEYER

## 1. Religion

In the early church there were many itinerant missionaries. They traveled from village to village preaching the "Good News of God." In their journeys they came in contact with both pagans and established congregations of Christians. Besides bearing their own witness they usually carried messages from sister congregations or from some leaders of the Church. These they read to the Christian congregations.

1 John was one of these letters. It was written by one of the leaders of the early Church. Just who we don't know, even though the letter was given a title ascribing it to John. He was concerned about some false prophets whose teachings had been circulated among Christians in the Roman Province of Asia.

He wrote this letter of pastoral concern to his fellow Christians in order to strengthen them in faith, give them assurance of eternal life, and warn them about the heresies of the false prophets. It is generally thought that it was written somewhere between AD 95-110. In order to better understand what the letter has to say you should know a little about these false teachings.

There were many different religious views which the Christians had to fight against. Some of these false teachings appealed to the Christians of that day. The main group that the author of 1 John deals with in this pastoral letter are the Docetists ("seemists"). These were a group that considered man to be made of a divine soul put into an earthly body. They were only concerned with their soul because they felt that their body or anything that dealt with this world was evil. This led them to deny the Incarnation. They said it was scandalous to think that

a divine God would degrade himself and become a man. Jesus only "seemed" or "appeared" to be human. They thought that Christ's divine nature came upon him at his baptism and then left just before his passion and death. Because of their disdain for this world, Docetists believed that it didn't make any difference how you lived, since, only things of a "divine" or "spiritual" nature mattered.

Docetism was part of a larger heresy known as Gnosticism. This group thought that by a "gnosis" or "supernatural knowledge" one could come to God . . . one could "know" God. It emphasized the knowledge and ability of man. Man could think his way to God. Man could achieve his own salvation.

It was to these heresies that the author addressed himself when he wrote 1 John.

*Things to Think About:* What is the "word of life?"

*Read:* 1 John 1:1-4

*What About Now?* Are there any false beliefs today? Are they considered heretical? The author was under a compulsion to write this letter in order to share Christ. How can we share Christ



with our friends? The community we are in? Do we have a compulsion to do so?

## 2. What is Christianity?

The author sets out to right the false teachings as soon as he can as well as to bring some assurance to his Christian brothers. He talks about various tests to see if a person really has fellowship with God. (1:5-10) He speaks about "knowledge" of God and obedience to Him, (2:1-6) the new commandment of "love" and the "true" light. (2:7-11) Finally he seeks a decision from the young and old, whether they will be for the "world" or for the Father (2:12-17).

*Things to Think About:* What is meant by "light?" "Darkness?" What is involved in "walking in the light?" How does one "know" God? How can "love" be a commandment? (Compare Matthew 22:37-40)

*Read:* 1 John 1:5; 2:17

*What About Now?* 1. Many times pride and complacency hide us from the fact that we are sinners. How are we sinners? 2. How and why are we forgiven? Does God continue to forgive us if we continue in our old ways? 3. The author talks about "fellowship." What is it? Who is included in this fellowship? 4. What part does "faith" play in loving or hating your brother? 5. How are we tempted? Why are we tempted?

## 3. Who Is Jesus?

The author was convinced that the "last days" or the great final conflict was underway. Since the "last days" were to be marked by the appearance of anti-christs he believed that the Docetism heresy was an anti-christ. As he condemned these false prophets he also sought to mobilize his fellow Christians to a deeper conviction and a resistance to this anti-christ.

The word "anoint" may cause some trouble. Apparently the false prophets claimed to have a special "anointing" whereby they entered into some "superior knowledge." However, the author writes that all Christians have received an

"anointing" at their baptism, which was the gift of the Holy Spirit.

*Things to Think About:* Who is Jesus? Is He Man? Is He God?

What is eternal life?

*Read:* 1 John 2:18-27

*What About Now?* 1. What might be considered the anti-christ in our society?

2. What can the Church do for the "total" man?

## 4. Life in the Family of God

As the author condemns those who are the hearers of false teachings so he seeks to upbuild the faith of the family of God. In this section he contrasts the "children of God" and the "children of the devil." He does this in the face of the "second coming of Christ" as well as in the day to day life of the Christian. (2:28;3:10)

Verse 3:4 speaks of sin as lawlessness. This is not to be interpreted to mean that sin is only a disobeying of law. It is referred to in this manner just to impress upon the readers the gravity of it. A contrast of "love and life" and "hate and death" show some of the Christian's relations to the world. (3:11-18) As the final emphasis of this section the author points out that in the last analysis God is our judge and that our confidence is to be in him.

*Things to Think About:* What is sin? Does man have any freedom or is he just a puppet whose strings are pulled by God? "We receive from him whatever we ask," what does this mean?

*Read:* 1 John 2:28; 3:24

*What About Now?* 1. What is the family of God? What part do you play in this family? 2. If you are not "hated" by the world does it mean that you are not living as a Christian should? 3. We are asked to "lay down our lives for the brethren." What does this mean? How can we do this?

## 5. What is Love?

People were led astray by some false prophets who appeared "inspired." Inspiration, as such, is not the sole criterion of truth. There are many "spirits" who



are not to be trusted. The author in his second direct blast (other is in 2:18-27) against the false prophets sets up "tests" for prophets. (4:1-3)

Once again a contrast, this time between the "children of God" and the "children of the world." (4:4-6) Any real relation to God, such as "knowing God" or being "born of God," involves obedience to His commands. His supreme and all-inclusive command is that "we love one another." It is of this "love" that the author writes. (4:7-12)

*Things to Think About:* Is "love" the only criteria for "abiding in God?" What is "love?"

*Read:* 1 John 4:1-12

*What About Now?* 1. What part do the doubts that you have about certain doctrines, about Christ, about the Church, about the world, play in your growth as a Christian? 2. Are you able to "love" those who disagree with you? Those who are brilliant? Those who are slow? Those who come from a different background than you?

## 6. Living the Life of Love

With all the false teachings going on about them the Christians were fearful about their status. How could they be sure that they would do the right things in order to be looked upon with favor by God? The author clears away their doubts by showing them that their confidence is based upon the love of God for them. (4:13-18)

The importance of the right "confession" of Christ is stressed as well as obedience to His commands. (4:19; 5:5) What has been said is backed not only by the witness of man but by the witness of God. "There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood." (5:6-12)

*Things to Think About:* The greatest themes of the epistle are centered in 4:16. Do you understand what it says? Great stress is laid upon the proper "confession" in 5:1-5. Why is it so important?

*Read:* 1 John 4:13; 5:12

*What About Now?* 1. "It doesn't make any difference what you believe as long

as you believe." What do you think about this? 2. How can love cast out fear? Have you seen any instances where love has turned fear to trust? 3. Is a Christian to lead an easy life?

## 7. The Certainty of Faith

Confidence in God is expressed by our "anything according to his will." The duty of intercessory prayer for the brethren is made clear. (5:13-17) Some problems may be raised by the concept of "mortal sin" presented in 5:16. There is the realization that "all wrongdoing is sin" in 5:17 as well as in other parts of this letter. This distinction in the gravity of offence is partly an adoption from the Jewish synagogues of that period as well as an outgrowth of the growing organization of the Church around A.D. 100. 1 John is closed with three ringing affirmations of the truth of the Christian message and the hope of eternal life. (5:18-21)

*Things to Think About:* For what should a Christian pray? Is all prayer answered?

*Read:* 1 John 5:13-21

*What About Now?* 1. What good does it do to pray for someone? 2. Are Christians to be exempt from suffering? Why? 3. What "idols" can you help to overthrow in your own life? In your league and congregation? In your community?

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

This topic should be spaced out over several meetings. Or it could be used for special Lenten Bible studies for leaguers. The leaguers might plan to meet in small groups in one another's homes, or as a large group.

Each person should read 1 John through before attending any meetings. It would be wise to have various translations available, plus Bible dictionaries, commentaries, etc.

The introduction to the section should be given by the leader. The leaguers are to keep the "Things to Think About" in mind as they read. After all have finished reading, discuss the text.

When a reasonable understanding of the text has been achieved the leader should turn to "What About Now?" These thoughts are to trigger thoughts about application of the text.

Close the Bible study with prayer.



## SELF-DENIAL or SELF-GIVING

**Purpose of the Topic:** to stimulate junior highs into thinking of new ways of gaining more inspiration from the richly devotional season of Lent; to guide them into testing for themselves traditionally accepted Lenten attitudes; to turn the spotlight from self to serving others, which is the essence of our Lord's Passion.

by RICHARD M. BENNETT

THE thermometer was soaring in the 90's in an unseasonal October California heat-wave as the intermediate leaguers gathered for a discussion led by the pastor.

"Perhaps you will cool off a bit this hot evening, when I ask you to give me some of your ideas about a winter-time topic I've been asked to prepare!"

"Oh, for a snowball, right now!" piped up Jim.

"Come on gang," chimed in President Dale. "Let's throw the pastor a few *verbal* snowballs! What's the topic, Pastor?"

The Pastor continued: "Let's all pretend that we are just approaching the Lenten season, that time of the year when Christians everywhere meditate upon the great self-sacrifice of our Lord, how He gave His life on the cross to save all mankind.

"It's only natural for believers, concentrating once again on the great self-denial of our Lord—how He gave up His young manhood and set aside His

desire to continue to live, a desire as strong as that same desire in you and I—me—to want to give up something in their own lives. Often they will give up daily luxuries or rich foods during the Lenten season.

"Some of you have given up candy, malts, even going to movies, during this holy season. Insofar as this helps you to think more gratefully of the self-denial of our Lord, and releases more of your allowance or income to further His Kingdom, this is good.

"But there are dangers in this practice. If you're aware of the dangers, it will help you to avoid them. The major danger is self-pride: 'Look at what a good boy I am,' and somehow we may feel more acceptable to God. This takes our thoughts away from Christ, and concentrates them back on self."

"That's what I say, Pastor," broke in Ted. "Why can't I *give*—more of time and efforts for *others*—instead of just *giving up* for Lent?"



"Sure," said Betty. "That would be more truly imitating Christ, wouldn't it?"

Bud carried the argument a bit further. "Jesus went about healing and preaching. If we try to be more like Him during Lent, we could think of ways to help in the healing of sick people, and tell more folks about God's love."

"I've got it!" declared David. "Why don't we go to the hospital during Lent, once a week, and visit the sick people. Maybe we could give them a picture of Jesus, or a New Testament."

This idea caught on fast, and for the first time the League had dreamed up a Lenten service project! Other details were added, like having the League also sing Lenten hymns in the hospital wards.

But the pastor got the group back on the theme "I like your spirit of wanting to accentuate the positive. If we approach Lent in merely a negative way, and merely remove things from our lives, we may create a vacuum into which worse things might move. Jesus told a parable to that effect, you'll remember.

"Let me illustrate what I'm trying to say. Let's say that you decide to give up watching television—at least part of every week during Lent. Now that you have more free time, what are you going to do with it? Read? But, *what* are you going to read? Your self-denial will have good results if you use this new free time to read your Bible, or prepare a League topic, or listen to good devotional recordings\*, or for prayer."

Once again the wheels were rolling. "Say, Pastor, don't we always have mid-week services during Lent? We could use one of our free evenings to call on unchurched friends from school and invite them to the Wednesday Lenten services!"

The pastor smiled his approval. "I can see that I just can't keep you from turning self-denial into a positive force for serving others. And, of course, that is the whole reason for the emphasis on personal devotions and meditation during Lent—to recharge our spiritual batteries that we may go out and serve all the more unselfishly.

"Your fresh approach to Lent will

never result in the dead end of self-service. But let's not confuse this with self-growth, which is something each of us needs if we are to serve Christ better. We could make the mistake of becoming so busy in our Lenten service projects that we would miss the grand opportunity of this season to 'be still and know' that He is God.

"Every godly person needs time to wrestle with his or her personal problems and to draw closer to the Saviour in order to gain the strength to overcome those problems. Paul withdrew to the desert for many years before God felt he was prepared to be a missionary. Even Jesus went into the wilderness to wrestle with—and overcome—Satan.

"So, let's not be afraid to be inactive in an outward way, if at the same time we are actively growing up in Christ, inwardly.

"Why don't we try to strike a happy balance? Let's *do* set aside more time to concentrate on our Master during Lent—this will undoubtedly mean giving up certain material things and other distractions that would keep us from centering our attention on Jesus.

"But, let's also use a portion of the time and money that we rescue for bringing the Lenten Gospel to others."

*"Thy life was given for me;  
What have I given for Thee?"*

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

Here is a seasonal topic that should evoke considerable discussion on the part of junior high leaguers. You, as the leader, can make sure that it does by your preparation and by the way you introduce the topic.

One interesting way of introducing the material would be to have two persons seated before the group discussing the pros and cons of "self-denial" versus "self-giving" during Lent. You could fill in from the topic with any pointers they fail to bring out then, throw it out to the group for its opinion.

You could also appoint a "blackboard secretary" to list arguments for and against this rather unusual approach to the traditional Lenten theme of self-denial.

Why not place on a display table an array of helpful books of prayer and meditation especially useful during Lent?

*(Continued on page 47)*



# God's Hand In Our Lives

by LOWELL BRESTEL HAZZARD

## *God's will in our lives*

**W**HEN I was a young man, we used to be told that God has a plan for every life. If we will listen, our teachers told us, God will tell us what he wants us to do. So we will be sure that we have found the right place.

Perhaps this teaching was too simple. Perhaps it encouraged us to depend on some kind of mystical experience, which never came. Nevertheless, I cannot but feel that it had a great deal of truth in it. Else why do we continue to use the word, "vocation" which surely implies a "call" from God?

Three truths I believe to be valid:

1. *God does have a will, which he desires to see worked out in the life of each of us.* It is unthinkable that God should be our creator, and not have a purpose which he expects us to fulfill. If it is too naive to assume that there is only one possible calling for each of us, if we are to be in line with God's will, it is not naive to assume that there is a direction in which God wants us to go, and that some paths are more in accordance with that direction than others.

It is necessary, therefore, that we should seek God's will for our lives. It is not enough that we should seek our own.

2. *If we are ever to find God's will, it is necessary that we should first of all put ourselves completely into his hands.*

There is a tendency on the part of vocational guidance experts today, even leaders in the church, to talk as though the choice of lifework was pretty largely in our hands; and as though when we have chosen our vocations, we can then "use them for God," and all will be well. So the church experts talk much as the secular experts do, in terms of aptitude tests, and interest inventories, in terms of "openings," and satisfactions, and income and security.

But I am sure that all this is getting the cart before the horse. It is true that God will not call a man to a task for which he is not fitted. Therefore aptitude tests and interest inventories are all to the good. It is true that God will not call a person to a task where he is not needed. Therefore to survey the "openings" is quite essential. But all of these come after, and not before the essential thing, which is putting our lives into the hands of God.

The story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac is of eternal significance here. Whatever we may think otherwise about that story, it is true that Abraham



had to be willing to lay everything upon the altar, including the child of promise, before he could see clearly what God did require.

When I was a youth we took the "Whatever, Whenever, Wherever" pledge, "Whatever God wants, wherever and whenever he wants it, I will do that thing." It led us into paths of high adventure for him. We sang: "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord" and we meant it. We found God's will for our lives.

3. When we have put our lives into God's hands, and sought to discover our aptitudes, our interests, and life's opportunities, *God will guide us*, not so much by voices and visions as by the doors that open and the doors that close.

Many young people want to see their whole life mapped out before them before they take a single step. Many turn heaven and earth to get just the chance they desire at the very beginning of the way.

But God does not usually show us the entire path at once. There are likely to be many training tasks that must be done before the great opportunity of life comes. We must be willing, therefore, to let life open up before us as it will. It usually opens by little opportunities in which we may not see the hand of God at all.

If, then, we want to discover God's will for our lives, we are most likely to find it by getting for ourselves the best preparation possible in the field to which our interests and aptitudes seem to point. Then, doing the very best job we can on the seemingly unimportant opportunities that come to hand, we find God's guiding hand.

If, therefore, we are seeking to guide young people into the vocations that God has for them, as most of the readers of this page probably do, let us not be too sophisticated to talk in old-fashioned

terms of God's will and God's call and our dedication. It is not necessary to make any distinctions between church vocations and other vocations. God needs people in both. But it is necessary that the young people whom we seek to lead shall be seeking God's will and not their own.

If the service vocations are going begging today, while our society runs madly after profit, it is partly because we who seek to lead youth in Christian paths have forgotten to teach the meaning of dedication and of vocation. There is no more important question for youth to face than the question, "Do I want God's hand in my life?"

### PRESENTATION POINTERS

Appoint a committee to conduct a survey among the leaguers (perhaps adults also). The question to be asked is, "Do you think God has a will for individual lives? If so, how does He make it known to us?"

Prior to the meeting compare the negative and affirmative answers. List on a blackboard the results of the second part of the question.

Read through results with leaguers. Before any discussion give the topic. Have a placard to hold up for each of the three truths. Place these in a prominent place. Follow with discussion. You might invite active church members to tell you how God has guided them.

### WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

You may use the service for personal redemption or Lent (in the back of the *Christian Youth Hymnal*), or the following outline:

HYMN 64 "Breathe on Me, Breath of God"

PRAYER 42 or 61 (CYH)

SOLO (Hymn 91 "O Gracious Father of Mankind")

PSALM 63 and 121

HYMN 216 "God Calling Yet!"

SCRIPTURE Exodus 3:1-12

HYMN 226 "In Glad Obedience to Thy Call"

HYMN 290 "We Give Thee But Thine Own"

HYMN 198 "Draw Thou My Soul, O Christ"

HYMN 195 "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee"

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### DISCUSSION

How do we know God is concerned about us as individuals? How do we fit into His ultimate plan? How can we put ourselves in His hands? Can you give examples of people who have felt God's guiding them? In what ways can God guide us? What is the difference between a Christian vocation and a church vocation?

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE 1958 HIGH IDEALS INDEX: In the summer 1958 issue of HIGH IDEALS (pages 19-28) there was an index covering the issues from 1951 through 1957. The index will prove quite useful if you keep it up to date. With two copies of the summer issue, you could cut out each section and paste it on a separate sheet of notebook paper. Now cut the sections from the three pages in this issue and add them to the end of the category under which they fit in your big index. Now you have a complete index from 1951 through 1958. The 1959 index will appear in the winter 1960 issue. You may make a similar index from the issues of LUTHER LIFE (July 1958 with seven year index and December 1958 with the '58 index). These indexes have been prepared for your benefit and help in planning successful Luther League programs.



# Homes Tell Of Those Who Dwell Within

a topic on worship  
in the family

by MELBA SHEALY



## PRELUDE CALL TO WORSHIP

"Happy the home where Jesus' Name  
Is sweet to ev'ry ear;  
Where children early lisp His fame,  
And parents hold Him dear.

"Happy the home where prayer is heard,  
And praise is wont to rise;  
Where parents love the sacred Word  
And all its wisdom prize."

(from The Cokesbury Worship Hymnal)

HYMN "Jesus Calls Us; O'er The Tumult" #204 PSH or 251 CYH)

SCRIPTURE: People are different . . . homes are different. But homes tell of the personalities and tastes of its family members. A slogan that is frequently seen reads like this: "Families that pray together stay together." There are frequent refer-

### PURPOSE OF THE TOPIC:

1. To stress the importance of Christ's being invited as a member of our family.
2. To teach that a Christian environment (pictures, music, books, conversation) make a lasting influence on young people.
3. To encourage leaguers to continue, or to establish, a family altar in their home.

ences in the Bible about families worshipping together because family worship is a very old practice. Among these references are: Genesis 18:19, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, and Acts 16: 30-34. (*read*)

TOPIC PRESENTATION (*Switch off all lights except the reader's stand*)

READER: How much religion is in your home? Does Christ live in your home? I don't mean, are you and your family considered respectable people, or if you and your mom, dad, brothers and sisters go to church every Sunday, or do you say your prayers, or if you read your Bible? I mean, do you consider Christ as a member of your family? Is "Christ the Head of your Home, The Unseen Guest at every meal, The Silent Listener to every conversation" in your home and among your immediate family? Why is it that people rarely talk about religion except in church, as if sixty minutes a week is enough time out of 168 hours or 10,080 minutes to give to the Lord?

To help me present some ideas concerning family worship, I am going to use the help of a simple conversation between members of a family. The setting is simple, and a common one—since it takes place around a dining room table where eating is in progress. (*Mother lights the candles on table*) The conversation has been going on for some time now, but let's listen in for parts of the conversation. Alice (the girl speaking) spent the weekend with a girl friend named Jane and she is telling her family about the weekend activities. Let's listen. . . .

ALICE: (1) Jane's home was not a large home. It was a brick bungalow which looked very much like all of the other houses on the same street. But the minute we reached the door, I realized that it was very different from the usual homes I have visited. I could tell from the way the members of her family talked and from the things around us, that Jane's family were "doers" as well as "hearers" of God's Word. Jane's mother met us at the door, and gave me a most cordial welcome into their home.

(2) As we entered the living room, I saw a picture of Christ. It was not a large picture—but it was a good print of Sallman's painting of the "Head of Christ"—I know, because it is just like the one hanging in our Sunday School room. It was in a beautiful frame and was hanging over a combination radio-television-recording player. It could be seen from the sofa or any of the chairs in the living room by all who visited. Because of the arrangement of their home, the picture was also at an ideal place to be seen while eating around the dining room table.

READER: Our parents have answered a Christian Vocation call—a call to serve as Christian parents and to provide a Christian home. And when you were baptized, your parents made certain vows or promises. Listen to parts of that Baptismal Service. (*Read from the Common Service Book*) The pastor asked, "Do you present this child to be baptized into this Christian Faith?" The parents promised by answering, "I do." The Pastor asked another question: "Do you promise to instruct him (or her) in the Word of God, and to bring him (or her) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" The parents promised by answering: "Yes, I promise." The pastor says: "I now admonish you who have done so charitable a work to this child in his (or her) Baptism, that ye diligently and faithfully teach him (or her) the Ten Commandments, The Creed, and the Lord's Prayer; and that, as he (or she) grows in years, ye place in his (or her) hands the Holy Scriptures, bring him (or her) to the Services of God's House; and provide for his (or her) instruction in the Christian Faith, that, abiding in the covenant of his (or her) Baptism, and in communion with the Church, he (or she) may be brought up to lead a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ. Amen."

Some of you will receive the same type call in the future. How serious will you be about vows or promises you may make? One thing for certain—you will have some sort of home. A mansion, a bungalow, or apartment, or just a room; wherever you establish residence, that will be your home. What will your home be? Will be built upon the foundations of the Church? Will Christ live in your home?

ALICE: (3) There were magazine racks and books in various rooms of the house. The magazine racks held their church publications such as, *The Lutheran* (our ULCA publication), *Luther Life* and *HIGH IDEALS* (our youth publications), *Foreign Missionary* (foreign mission magazine), as well as magazines such as *Reader's Digest*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Charm*, *Seventeen* and *Boy's Life*. Occupying prominent places on the tables and book shelves were well-worn books such as the novels *The Robe* by Douglass and *The Day That Christ Died* by Bishop, *Christ And The Fine Arts* by Maus, *A Guide To Religions* edited by Leo Rosten, a Bible Concordance, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, *Two Minutes With God* by Hoh and Hoh, and our *Common Service Hymnal*.

(4) In the room where I slept, there was a Bible and a devotional booklet "Light for Today," which is supplied by their church to its church members, on the bedside table. These books showed evidence of constant use. Jane explained to me that these books along with many more books to be found on the book shelves were used in preparing their family worship. They have set aside a certain time during the day when their whole family gets together and worship together—and they call it "family altar." They found that the best time that they could all get together was after the evening meal—so, I was real anxious for that time to come because I wanted to know what they did at a "Family Altar."

READER: One of the biggest obstacles in beginning a family altar will be to find a time when all of the family can get together. It will be hard at first, to adjust our schedule of everyday living to include an added feature. The time will vary according to different families. Be it early morning (before or after breakfast), at the evening meal, or bedtime, that time should be kept free from distraction and the family should avoid making any changes from that certain time. Really, should it be so hard to find time for a few minutes with God when we make time available to go to school, to go to football games, the show, or fishing?

Such books as mentioned by Alice which were found in Jane's home will strengthen our faith as individual Christians. It was easy to know what this Christian family believed. It's amazing how all these kind of things can become a means of witnessing for Him and serving Him.

ALICE: (5) Jane has a younger sister and a younger brother. Sometimes, because of school activities, club activities, or parents' working hours which will make it impossible for the whole family to be together at one time, Jane's mother will take part in two devotional periods. This does not happen very often because they have set a time for the worship together and they try to plan no interferences.

READER: When father, mother and children worship together, there is a feeling of unity or oneness. They are bringing God into their family life . . . they have a daily contact with God. They are creating a strong tie which will prevent broken homes. When the family members gather together for this period of worship, they are giving Christ a place in their home . . . by worshiping Him, trusting Him, witnessing for Him, and serving Him. This type of a family will be faithful and loyal church members. Our country needs Christian homes where the family will serve Christ and give Him first place in their hearts. A truly Christian home does not exist if Christ is not considered a member.

Prayer, study of the Catechism, family devotions, and hymn singing was a very common practice in the family life of Martin Luther, too. Even the visitors were expected to join in the devotions. Would we be embarrassed for visitors in our home to know that Christ is a member of our family? Even though a mother's life during a day is a very busy one, she should take time to help care for her children spiritually. Sometimes a mother will serve more than one breakfast or any other meal to help care for her family's physical needs. Should the spiritual needs of her family be slighted?



ALICE: (6) A blessing for their food is never omitted. To them, this is an expression of their religion. Various members of the family would ask the blessing at the meals. Jane used a simple verse which we learned in one of our first classes at Week Day Church School. Then her father prayed a beautiful prayer at the dinner hour and I actually heard every word he said. And at lunch we all sang the "Doxology." It finally came time for the evening meal and one of the times I was really looking forward to with a great deal of interest. After the meal and all dishes had been removed from the table onto a serving cart, Jane's sister got three hymn books—they were all different but they all had the one hymn which Jane's mother needed in the devotions. Then, in a quiet atmosphere and with a spirit of reverence, our attention was focused to a picture which was hanging on one of the walls in the dining area. I had not noticed it until then.

(7) Oh, mom and dad, we've finished eating. We are all together. Could you conduct those devotions instead of telling about them? I borrowed *Christ and the Fine Arts* from Jane's mother and it has the picture and the artist's interpretation of the same picture which they had on their wall.

(Girl clears the table and gets necessary books)

READER: The type of devotions used by families will vary. Scripture reading and prayer are two simple and essential elements for you to remember in beginning your family worship. The very fact that you are interested in having a family altar is an indication of your spiritual life that is pleasing to God and God helps those who try to do His will. God's presence will furnish the necessary courage you will need. You will want good material for your devotions. Your pastor will be glad to furnish you with a list of Christian books and magazines for your home. Some families started a pattern for family worship by listening to hymn recordings. Add variety to your devotions—don't get in a rut. Hymns could be sung with a piano, read in unison, or sung without any music. For devotions on Saturday, it would be good to read the introit, collect, epistle and gospel for the following day. The family altar could be held around a campfire after a family picnic and a car trip seems much shorter and interesting with all singing some songs or hymns or maybe a discussion of your Sunday School lesson for the week. The Scripture lesson may be read by some one member of the family, or by several members in turn, or by all in unison.

The place of your devotions could depend upon the time and the type. Some families erect a simple altar which could be a table with a cross and candle-sticks. Beautiful pictures in various rooms are a constant reminder that God is with us watching and listening to us. Make these pictures come alive—center your devotions around them. Devotions could be held around the dining room table with various arrangements on the table or on the buffet. A worship center is a reminder that God is gracious and kind to us.

ALICE: Mother, will you read the first verse of our hymn, 203 in PSH (or 22 CYH).

MOTHER: (reads first verse.)

ALICE: Dad, here is the Bible opened to Revelation 3:20. Will you read our scripture lesson, please?

DAD: (takes Bible and reads) "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me."

ALICE: (holds the book so as to show the members around the table the picture) When Holman Hunt painted his great masterpiece, "The Light of the World," he kept painting as he was inspired by the portion of scripture, which Dad read to us. This picture shows Christ standing outside a fast-closed door. Christ is continually challenging men, women, and young people to follow His way of life.

Notice the picture in detail. The artist has portrayed the door of the human heart with rusty hinges, the door is barred with nails, brambles and wild grass have taken over the threshold. There is no latch or knob—in fact, there is no way of opening the door from the outside—the door must be opened from within.

Christ will not force His way into our heart or into our home. But, He stands at the door of each one of our hearts, asking to be admitted. How, then, is Christ to be admitted into our home? He must be invited—the door must be opened from within, which shows our desire for Christ to be our guest—a member of our family. Shall we turn Him away?

Let's read our hymn together. We have only two books but we can group together. (*get in a group toward the back of the table so that no backs will be to the leaguers*.) The words have so much meaning. (*read together*) Let us pray together the Lord's Prayer. (*pray*)

READER: No more splendid tribute could be paid to noble mothers and fathers who have given their children the training which only a Christian home can give than to have their child say:

(8) "All that I am, and any success or fame that has come to me, I owe to the training of the Christian home in which I grew up and I only hope I can follow in their footsteps." (*The Christian Home* by P. D. Brown, page 63)

"Lord, let us in our homes agree

This blessed peace to gain;

Unite our hearts in love to Thee,

And love to all will reign." (*The Cokesbury Worship Hymnal*)

OFFERING

PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN "O Jesus, Thou Art Standing"

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

Numbers throughout the script refer to the pictures to be used in presenting the program (as suggested under suggestions a and b).

If you have a leaguer who is a camera bug with a 35mm camera, he might like to take the necessary picture slides in various leaguers' homes to add a personal touch to the program. If this is not possible, look through magazines for pictures to be used on a flannelgraph. Be sure the pictures are large enough to be seen by the leaguers watching the program.

The pictures needed according to the numbers are: 1—brick bungalow; 2—Sallman's painting of the "Head of Christ;" 3—magazine rack and book shelves or books on a table; 4—books on bedside table; 5—mother reading Bible stories to children or children kneeling in prayer by bed; 6—"Grace" at a meal; 7—Hunt's painting "The Light Of The World;" 8—a little girl standing in a pair of high heel shoes—much too big for her.

### Presentation Ideas:

a. Use a leader reading from a stand on one side of room; a table with a father, mother, son and daughter, eating by candlelight on the

opposite side of room; a projector focused so that the picture slides can be shown on wall over the heads of those seated at the table. There should be no other lights in the room after the Scripture Lesson (except the light which is being used by the reader and the candles on the table) until time for the offering.

b. Use a leader, reading from a stand on one side of room with a flannelgraph nearby and instead of using picture slides, pictures drawn on colored construction paper or cut from magazines would be placed on the flannelgraph as the conversation at the table progresses.

Arrange a display table showing the books, booklets and magazines which were mentioned in the script and any others which might be suggested by your pastor or advisor.

## THINGS TO DO

Projects for this program: a) design and carve Altar out of a large bar of Ivory Soap; b) whittle small crosses out of pieces of wood—these to be used in the leaguers' bedrooms; c) make a book of outlines for family worship services which have been submitted by leaguers; d) write verses to some of your favorite hymn tunes; e) make altar triptychs to be used in leaguers' homes.

(Continued on page 47)



## Genesis Bible Study 1

by JOHN BUERK

### True or False:

1. The book of Genesis is the oldest book in the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
2. The Old Testament is the oldest known religious literature? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Actually there are two stories of creation in the book of Genesis? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Other religious literature has reference to a flood story like the story of Noah? \_\_\_\_\_
5. One man wrote the book of Genesis? \_\_\_\_\_
6. The first five books of the Bible are considered a unit. The reason they were not joined together is because they could not all fit on one scroll? \_\_\_\_\_
7. There were two trees in the garden of Eden from which Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat? \_\_\_\_\_
8. The book of Genesis was written soon after the events in it occurred? \_\_\_\_\_
9. The ancient Hebrew thought that rain came down through the stars from a sea above the sky? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Abraham is looked upon as the father of all Jews? \_\_\_\_\_

# IN THE BEGINNING

THE Book of Genesis is one of the most thought provoking, and yet one of the least understood, Books in the Bible. This confusion arises from a misunderstanding of why and how the book was written. Since Genesis contains so much history, theology, biography and just plain wonderful stories about God's chosen people, it would take a sizeable volume to cover it even in part.

The following study will give us a glimpse of Genesis. First, there is a look at reasons why the book was written. Second, a discussion on how the Hebrew viewed the world. Third, some material on who wrote Genesis and how it was written. Finally, a presentation of some of the ideas in the Book, and their meaning for us.

## GENESIS ANSWERS SOME BASIC QUESTIONS

We all ask ourselves questions like: "I wonder where I came from?" "I wonder

why I am here?" "I wonder what makes me the way I am?" These questions are not original with us. All men have asked them in all cultures. The ancient Hebrew was no exception. He lived in a world in which he had to struggle constantly with nature, with his enemies and with himself. He, too, wondered where he came from, how he got the way he was, and what he could do about his situation.

He had a big advantage over other people, though. The Hebrew knew God and God spoke to him. The book of Genesis records the truth which was made known to the Hebrew through his relationship to the Living God.

## THE HEBREW VIEW OF THE WORLD

If we are to be able to look intelligently at the book of Genesis, we must first see what the ancient Hebrew thought the world was like. He was pretty primi-



ve as you can realize. He did not have the instruments that we do to measure the world. He could not travel very far. He had no books to read which would explain nature. Why nature worked the way it did, was a mystery to him. All he had to work with was imagination.

The Hebrew imagined the world as divided into three stories. The earth was flat. On it were several seas—the Mediterranean Sea being the most important one called the "Great Sea." The earth was surrounded by water, and still another sea of water under the earth. The sky was held up by four pillars. Above the sky there was another huge sea. The stars were holes in the sky through which this water came when it rained. Above this sea was God's throne.

This is how the Hebrew conceived of the world. It was with this primitive knowledge that he talked about his relationship to God. It was within this world that God spoke to his chosen people. It was from this world that we listen carefully, for the word spoken then helps us to understand who we are now, and what we are here for.

## WHO WROTE GENESIS AND WHEN

Genesis is not the first Book written in the Old Testament. Some of the ancient laws, some of the Psalms and still other material was written sooner. Also, much of the ancient Indian and Chinese religious literature is older than the Old Testament.

When was Genesis written and who wrote it? Around 1200 B.C. Moses left Egypt with twelve Hebrew clans and started for the Holy Land. When they arrived, there was a struggle to become established and organized. Finally, these tribes became a kingdom under Saul and David. In 940 B.C., however, the kingdom split into two sections. The northern realm was called Israel and it had its capital at Samaria. The southern realm was called Judea and it had its capitol at Jerusalem.

Each of these sections had men who wrote down their experiences. It was

probably after 1000 B.C. that the stories about what happened in their early history before they were enslaved by the Egyptians were written down. We can see evidences of these two groups of writings in the first two chapters of Genesis. Note, for instance, that in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible the word "God" is used in the first chapter, and the word "Lord God" is used in the second chapter. These are really two slightly different stories of the creation. See if you can pick out the differences.

Even though these slight differences exist, the stories still complement each other, and both stories emphasize that God is the source of all life. Sometimes the authors of Genesis employed other stories from other cultures to make their point. A good illustration of this is a story from the Babylonians called the "Gilgamesh Epic." Since the Hebrews once lived in Babylonia, we can see how they would be acquainted with this story. It is the story of Ut-na-pish-tim who was liked by one of the many gods whom the Babylonians worshipped. The gods decided one day to send a flood down upon the earth. Ut-na-pish-tim was warned by his friend, the god Ea, that he should build a great ship and take on it his family, some craftsmen and a number of animals. A storm came up which lasted for six days and six nights. It destroyed all of mankind. The seventh day, when the storm subsided, Ut-na-pish-tim sent out three different birds—a dove, a swallow and a raven. The first two returned to the ship indicating that water still covered the earth. The third one did not return which meant that the waters had subsided. As soon as they unloaded the ship, Ut-na-pish-tim and his family offered a sacrifice to the gods.

There are several differences between this story and the story of Noah in the sixth through ninth chapters in Genesis. Two differences are outstanding. The first is the understanding that the Babylonians had of the way their gods did things as compared to the way God works. The Babylonian gods disagreed among them-

selves. That is why one god was good to Ut-na-pish-tim whereas the other gods would just as well have seen him perish in the flood. Noah's God respected Noah for his righteous life. The second is that God made a promise to Noah by placing a rainbow in the sky, assuring Noah that He would always be merciful.

## A BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. Here was a primitive people. They saw things in nature, and they attempted to explain them, but they always did so in the light of God's revelation. They had to use their primitive understanding of the world, but they always did so with a sense of God's love and with respect to his moral laws. The Hebrews were curious as to why snakes crawled, why snakes ate dust (at least they thought that snakes ate dust), why there were so many different languages, why men had to work so hard, why there was a rainbow, why men seemed to display a nature which rebelled against God.

The story of Adam and Eve explains our human nature. It is a profound story about the truth of our personality. In Hebrew, Adam means man, and Eve means mother. These two figures are representative of the human race. As you read the third chapter of Genesis observe the situation that existed. Here was a golden age. Adam and Eve lived in a garden where everything was perfect. They lived in God's presence. He was real to them, and they were close to him. There were certain limitations, however, in their lives. One was that they were not supposed to eat from the tree in the center of the garden which was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Through temptation, Eve's curiosity was heightened. She took some of the fruit and ate it. Eve then persuaded Adam to taste the fruit, also. When God confronted them with what they had done, their first reaction was to hide, but they could not hide from God. When Adam saw that he was caught, he blamed Eve, and she in turn blamed the serpent for the temptation. It is here that we see

man's separation from God through his rebellious nature.

Can you see yourself in this story? We all suffer from a curiosity which is heightened by temptation. We all want to try the unknown, even when we have been forewarned of danger. We are all rebellious, and do not like to do what we are told. We all try to avoid God. We try to blame others for our failings. The book of Genesis gives us a true picture of ourselves.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF CREATION

For the Christian, God is real. As Christians we realize our dependence upon him, and we are aware that the world is His creation. When we read Genesis, we know that the stories speak about the truth of God's creation. We know this because we know God. The Hebrew also knew God. In Genesis, the ninth chapter, for instance, the Hebrews gave the reason for there being a rainbow in the sky. He did not base his reason for there being rainbows on a scientific fact as we do in our science courses. He based his reason on his experience with God. He knew that God was concerned for him, and it was because of this sense of God's love that the rainbow became a symbol of God's eternal care for man. That he used his imagination does not make his story less true. The important thing about a rainbow was not why it was there, but that it meant God cared.

Genesis essentially is the result of how the Hebrew interpreted his experience in life as God entered into them. We must remember that before anything could be written down about God creating the world, God first had to be experienced.

We, too, experience God as a creator. We see him creating new life each spring. We see him creating each time a new child is born. In the way we are made to feel warm and important when we are loved, there is an act of creation. In all of all these things is the creative force of God. This the Hebrew knew.

*(Continued on page*

# HOW YOU USE YOUR BIBLE



## *Genesis Bible Study 2*

by **JOHN BUERK**

**R**ECENTLY several Negro students visited white churches in a Southern state. In the first congregation they visited, the congregation appeared indifferent to their presence. In the second church, however, they were told that they could stay, but that they would have to sit in a special section of the church. Following the service, the minister said to them, "God did not intend that white men and black men should be together, even in the worship of God." When they asked why, the minister told the Negroes, "Because it says so in the Bible."

"Where does it say that?" inquired one of the boys, feeling rather uncomfortable. "I don't know exactly where," the minister replied, "but it's in there somewhere, because I've read it!"

The passage to which the minister very likely was referring was one in the ninth chapter of Genesis. Here, Ham, one of Noah's three sons, accidentally walked into his father's tent and saw him lying naked on his bed. For the ancient He-

brew, this was a gross sin. When Noah woke up, his two other sons, Shem and Japheth, told him what had happened. Noah was enraged! He said to Ham, "Cursed be Canaan (Ham's son); a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers."

We see here an expression of Hebrew racial prejudice. As mentioned in our first study of Genesis, this book was written long after the reported events occurred. Often, the record of the events was phrased to justify a present prejudice. This is an example of such a situation. When Moses came into the land promised him by God, the Canaanites were already there. They had to be fought against and defeated in order that the Hebrews might possess the Promised Land. After conquering the Canaanites, the Hebrews enslaved them, and quite naturally felt ill towards them. Noah's cursing of Canaan is an attempt to justify what had happened.

Is this tendency unfamiliar to us in America? From the above illustration obviously it is not. The white men in America who produced slavery here also quoted this incident in Genesis, and so an evil institution has prevailed. What is worse, it tries to justify its actions by the Bible.

This is a good example of the misuse of the Bible, and especially of the book of Genesis. It alerts us to be careful how we use the Bible. It is not a simple process to face a problem and then go to the Bible to find a solution. The Word of God is something with which we must



live. The study of scripture is a process of discovering what went into the recording of certain incidents.

It is in this way that we may discern the truth of our own situation and the solution to our own problems. God is not dead! He did not die after the Bible was written. He is alive today, and His Spirit speaks through our conscience and through the love that is in our heart. Studying the Bible makes our conscience more alert and our heart more sensitive. Only so can we meet the challenges facing our generations as Christians obedient to the Living God.

## HOW TO USE THE BIBLE

What is the correct way to use the Bible? Let us use the message of Genesis as a background in studying one of the disturbing problems facing us as Americans and as Christians today. This is the problem of the breakdown of family life and the resultant consequences in juvenile delinquency and broken homes.

An outstanding psychiatrist through his work in a clinic to which many young people in trouble are brought, has had a chance to examine the causes for juvenile delinquency. He says that, without exception, a young person who gets into trouble has difficulty in some part of his family life. It does little good, this doctor claims, to work with a boy or girl unless he can also work with the parents. As a case is probed, it usually turns out that one of the parents or both of them have also had a poor family life. It appears that the words in the Old Testament book of Numbers 14:18 are being born out: "The Lord is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of fathers upon children, upon the third and fourth generation."

The religion of the Old Testament has its basis in the family. We can find in Genesis the foundation of Old Testament religion. Let us see what this foundation is.

One thing is especially prominent. That is the emphasis that Abraham is the

father of all Jews. Genesis 17 records the establishment of Abraham as the father of nations: "And God said to him, 'Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.'" The basic unit of the Hebrew religion was the family. This is where religion was taught, and this is where the culture was developed.

The present Jewish family carries on this same tradition, and its results are surprising. The superintendent of a prominent mental hospital said that they have very few Jewish mental patients. He said that the Jewish family and community is so tightly knit together that there is great security in it.

The director of a school of delinquent boys said much the same thing. Few Jewish boys become delinquent. They are not involved in their family relationships, and are so committed to the family honor and responsibility, that they wish to maintain this honor. When they do get out of hand, however, they usually are very difficult to help because they only endure public responsibilities after everything possible has been done to help them within the Jewish community.

The above illustrations are good evidence of the effectiveness of the Jewish religion in making society stable. It is obvious that our present cultural structure is different. In spite of television, colleges, homes are not the intimate places they used to be. Schools, clubs and even church functions draw the family apart. Some people think that the solution is to pull the family back together again. But this is not easily done.

What can we do? For the most part, the family, as the basis of religion, is the book of Genesis, is with us no longer. Can the Church help? How?

Let us start where we are right now with our Luther League. Here is a wonderful opportunity to add depth to our lives and to gain understanding of our true nature. Here is a chance to explore our relationship to God and to each

ther. Many times our Luther League topics talk about our surface problems, and never get down to the real things which trouble us. A lot of times our leaders are at fault, but sometimes we are too, because we fail to speak up.

Here are some suggestions. Genesis, especially in the third chapter, talks about the fall of man. Does this mean that we are not worth anything because Adam and Eve ate the fruit God had forbidden them to eat? No! It does mean that there is something inside man which makes him pretty mixed up as to just who he is and what he should and should not do. Some people say that original sin is selfishness. But does this mean that we have to stop thinking about ourselves? Again, the answer is no. Conceit, for instance, is never a personality trait of a person who is really adequate. The person who is conceited is so because he does not feel worthwhile. With this in mind, we really hurt the conceited person when we ignore him. What he needs is attention and a sense of worthwhileness. Our Christian community should be able to provide this.

It is not easy to accept ourselves as we are. But this is really the only way to start growing. If we start by denying ourselves, we make a mockery of our worship

of God, do we not? God does not want a "nobody" to worship him. He wants "children of God" to worship him. We are important, because God created us. It is this forgiving and loving relationship with him, as we understand it in Genesis and the rest of the Bible, that permits us to become mature Christians.

Following is an interest finder which may help you to pick out some of the problems which most of you face. Remember that the Bible has a lot to offer you by way of setting the tone of your answers. Live with God's word, it can make all the difference in the world, and in you.

### PRESENTATION POINTERS

This topic is complementary to the introductory study to Genesis. It is a critical look at the use and misuse of Biblical materials, and especially the way Genesis is abused. It, too, is designed to stimulate and not to satisfy. The interest form at the conclusion of the article should help to get your league started on some deep, but interesting material.

Any topic which evolves from this one, should reflect the concern of all, or at least most, of your leaguers. HIGH IDEALS is intended to help you search out your role in our common Christian faith. Our responsibility to live our faith is especially important these days. By thinking through our responsibilities together, we can do a better job.

### CHECK THE TOPICS WHICH INTEREST YOU:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. How do you know there is a God?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. What make me become angry?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Do we try to hide from God?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. How does God communicate with us now?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Is there a devil?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What is evil?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What is Christian love?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. What is salvation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. What is eternal life? Can you prove it?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. What is heaven like?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. What happens when we die?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Why do teenagers get into trouble?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. What agencies do cities have to help young people who get into trouble?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Is it wrong to hate somebody?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Is it wrong to dislike somebody?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. When is the world going to end?



## HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?

Quiz yourself  
on the church

by ELEANOR MORA

**T**HIS modern age is composed of letters. We go to school and learn the ABC's. We watch TV. We live in the U.S.A. Our national Church even goes by initials—the ULCA. Do you know what those initials stand for? (United Lutheran Church in America—not "of" America.)

(Begin to draw on the board.) The ULCA is composed of smaller groups known as synods. (Draw 2 or 3 lines to signify the ULCA branching out.) To what synod do we belong? (Ask the pastor before the meeting if you yourself

don't know.) (Continue drawing.) Some synods are broken down into districts, conferences, etc. (Have leaguers name smaller divisions to which you belong if they can. If not, tell them what the divisions are.) And finally down to the local church.

(Hold up Year Book.) This is the Year Book of our Church. It is published every year and has vital information concerning our Church. Can you think of some information that the Year Book contains? (Get definite answers—not vague ones. You may have appointed a committee beforehand to give some of this information.) For instance, if we look up our state, we can find our city and our church. There is all kind of information concerning our Church. (Read it.)

We know that Christians are named after Christ. Our Lutheran Church is named after the man who cleaned it of the evils that had fallen upon it during the Catholic hold of the Church universal. After whom was our Church named? (Martin Luther.) (Sing hymn 149, "Mighty Fortress Is Our God.")

Can you briefly describe Luther's coat of arms—the Luther League emblem? (You may want to hand out decals purchased from the LLA at 5 cents a piece.)

Recently we studied three creeds of the church. What are they? (Nicene Apostles', and Athanasian.)

Naturally, Lutherans want to know what their Church is doing—what is going on in the world that concerns Christians. We want to know how to apply Christian teachings in our every day life. What is the famous magazine of our Church that gives us this information? (THE LUTHERAN.)

There are organizations for the men, women, and young people of the ULCA. Can you name these organizations? (United Lutheran Church Women, United Lutheran Church Men, formerly the Brotherhood; and the Lutheran League of America.)

LLA publishes two magazines or topical manuals. Can you name them? (HIGH IDEALS, topical manual for interme-



tes; **LUTHER LIFE**, topic manual and magazine for all young people.) *If there are not many subscriptions to LUTHER LIFE in your league, secure free LUTHER LIFE fliers from the LLA office. Hand these out after the meeting, but indicate them now.)*

Where is the national headquarters of LLA? (2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia.) Leaguers should know it's in Philadelphia.) The president of LLA hit newspapers all over the states because she is the first female president of LLA and also the youngest president. Who is she? **Judy Ford.** Who is the Executive Secretary? (Rev. Leslie Conrad.)

The LLA works through five divisions. Name these divisions. (*List on board: Christian vocation, evangelism, missions, social action, and recreation.*) The LLA has two programs for senior high young people. One is work camps. The other involves traveling in teams to local leagues to help in program planning. What is this program called? **Caravanning.** *If a caravan team has visited your league refer to it. Perhaps you have a work camper or caravanner in your senior league who could speak briefly to the group.)*

Now, back to the ULCA. The president of the ULCA is a famous man. His name and picture have hit many big magazines. He is? (**Dr. Franklin Clark Fry.**) Dr. Fry is also president of the International Lutheran organization. This organization is called? (**Lutheran World Federation.**)

The Church offices are located in two cities. Where are they? (**Philadelphia and New York.** *You may want to give the complete addresses.*) While the LLA operates on a divisional plan, the ULCA calls its divisions "Boards." We have studied the boards of our Church. It is wise for us to know them. Let's list the eight boards on the black board. (*List.*)

Now, from this group of eight can you find the one that is responsible for building new churches in suburban areas? (**American Missions.**) What does the board of pensions do? (handles retirement money of pastors and lay work-

ers.) One Board has three divisions. They are evangelism, inner missions, and social action. Which board is this? (**Social Missions.**)

Which board gives vocational counseling to young people? (**Higher Education.**) Which board maintains two book stores in Philadelphia and in 11 other cities. (**Publication.**)

Which board handles the work of full time women workers in the Church? (**Deaconess Work.**) Where are the two deaconess schools? (**Baltimore, Md., and Philadelphia.**) What is the special training a girl receives in each of the schools? (**Baltimore—Christian education, parish work, secretarial; Philadelphia—all fields of social work, nursing.**)

Name some materials produced by the editorial division of the Board of Parish Education. (There are 26 in all. Some are Sunday School materials: Augsburg and Christian Growth, weekday church school series, daily vacation church school series, catechetical books, etc.)

What does the Board of Foreign Missions do? (supplies money, trains workers for fields overseas.) (*List the eight fields on the board.*) Can you tell something about each field? (*See 1958 issues of HIGH IDEALS.*)

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

This is a combination quiz. First of all, it is designed to test your information on our Church and to supply knowledge you don't have already. Secondly, this is a review. Practically all of this information has appeared in **HIGH IDEALS** within the last year.

In order to keep the topic from becoming a regular question and answer period, use the blackboard, fliers, copies of things to which you refer, have others give brief reports or summaries.

## WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

HYMN 71 "God Himself Is Present" (CYH)

SCRIPTURE Ephesians 4:1-16

SENTENCE PRAYERS

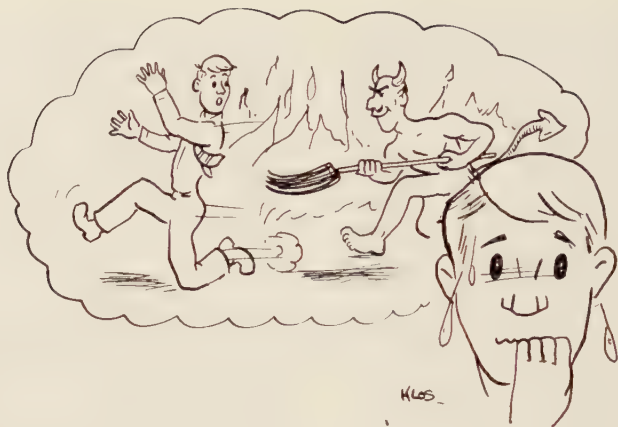
HYMN 148 "The Church's One Foundation"

THE APOSTLES' CREED

HYMN 236 "O Christians! Leagued Together"

PRAYER 36, page 369

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE (singing hymn 107 "Blest Be the Tie that Binds")



## WHEN DO YOU GET "SAVED"

how do you know if you're saved  
and what is the process?

by RICHARD C. KLICK

**E**IGHT-YEAR-OLD Joe had come upon the idea of a Judgment Day for the first time. Night after night he dreamed of the terrifying convulsions of earth, of Jesus' sudden descent like a thief in the night, of the sharp trumpet blasts of the heavenly host summoning the people of earth before the Judge.

Joe's nightmare would move into a magnified close-up as he observed the cold, piercing eye of God incisively separating the sheep from the goats. As in a rushing hurricane, Joe would inevitably find himself among the goats discarded into eternal torment. Joe would wake shrieking at the top of his voice, perspiring from head to foot, trembling like a leaf from sheer terror of God's judgment.

Shortly after Joe's sixteenth birthday he was traveling to the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania to take on his summer resort job as a soda-jerker. Aside from him on the bus sat a talkative, congenial fellow.

Suddenly this companion, turning to Joe with piercing eye, demanded, "Brother, are you saved?"

Completely flabbergasted, Joe mumbled, "I really don't know."

Slapping Joe's thigh, his companion exclaimed, "Brother, you must be sure about such things!"

Joe is a real person! Joe's puzzle is a real problem! Maybe you have shared it. Just what's the answer? How can you be sure that you are on the roadway to heaven? Which is the correct roadway?

How can you know Christ? Is a "conversion" good or bad? Is it enough to be a faithful, active church member?

By this time Joe decided to tackle the matter as thoroughly as he could. He would seek every bit of help he could possibly find. First, with a piece of paper at his side for notes, he spent an entire evening digging through the New Testament to find out how people came to a genuine religious life.

**Joe's Bible showed . . .**

. . . that persecuting Paul and tax-collecting Matthew came to accept Jesus through a sudden emotional experience. He was interested to discover that the night-friend Nicodemus and the sepulchregiving Joseph of Arimathea seemed to have honored Jesus after lengthy consideration. Such fellows as rugged John the Baptist or gentle Lazarus seemed to have been on Jesus' side from the start. The Bible seemed to show quite clearly that Jesus' followers accepted him within varying periods of time, a day, a year, or a lifetime. The important thing was to be Jesus' disciple.

Joe was tickled with his discovery. In true Sherlock Holmes style he decided to track it down further. A bit excitedly he approached his dad, while the pater was comfortably settled in his chair with pipe and paper.

"Dad," he challenged, "just which is the right way to accept Jesus,—excitedly or calmly, suddenly or deliberately?"

**Joe's Dad replied . . .**

. . . "Son, your mother became a Christian when she was 18, at a preaching mission. She accepted Christ then and has been true to him ever since. As for me, strikingly, it was four years at a Christian college that nudged me over to the faith side. But you, son, toddled to Sunday school as soon as your legs would carry you and mumbled 'Jesus' among the first words you ever spoke. Jesus has come into this family in varying ways: To your mother in an hour's service, to me in four years of school, to you in a total lifetime. Seems to me they're all okay!"

Now Joe was really excited! He had never before seen his father let down his hair quite so frankly on religious matters. So he decided to tackle his favorite school teacher, Prof. Stevens in social studies.

After class one afternoon he sauntered up to him casually and queried, "Professor, what's the deal on this religion stuff? Some folks seem to get all hepped up about it, while others are as cold as ice?"

**Joe's professor replied . . .**

. . . "Joe, I'm going to give you Dr. Norborg's recent book on *Varieties of Christian Experience*. In it this great Christian scholar outlines three general types of religious experience. The one is the 'land of the midnight sun.' Johann Sebastian Bach is an example. It includes those who live under the light of Christian truth all their lives. The second is the 'dawn experience.' John Bunyan is an example. It refers to those upon whom the sunlight of Christ shines gradually. The third is the 'black cellar to brilliant sun type.' Kagawa of Japan is a brilliant example. It designates those to whom Jesus' Saviorhood shines suddenly like a sunburst. The book, Joe is as tough as nails, but wonderful!"

With the book tucked under his arm, Joe trudged homeward. That very evening he settled down to digest Norborg, but one hour was enough. It was worse than chewing on nails! Certainly the whole thing could be simplified. With a flash of inspiration, he decided to put his Sunday school teacher, Mr. Benton, on the grille. He was always a real down-to-earth guy.

**The down-to-earth guy said . . .**

. . . "Joe, last Sunday you sang as a member of a trio in church—tenor, baritone, and bass. All three parts were necessary for the trio, though the melody moved about a bit. If I recall correctly, the melody started in the tenor, jumped to the bass, and finally ended in the baritone.

"People are like that. They're trios. They have head, heart, and hand. Some



call it intellect, feeling, and will. By whatever name you call it, everyone carries these three major ingredients. People differ very much with respect to which one of the three carries the melody or major theme in life. A good portion of humanity allows the head to dominate, others allow the heart to rule, while a large number honor the hand.

It really doesn't matter too much which dominates, as long as there is a good proportion among the three. Some folks are "all head and no heart" or "all heart and no head." That's bad. But if you apply a healthy measure of head, heart, and hand to Christ, I'm not too concerned about which one carries the melody."

Now, thought Joe, he was getting somewhere at last! He'd take a last and final try at the pastor. After all, he should know!

### The pastor smiled . . .

. . . "Yes, Joe, I thoroughly agree with Mr. Benton. Even my preaching from the pulpit is an appeal to all three elements inside of you. Usually my sermon opens with a clarification of some biblical incident, the appeal to your intellect. Then I ask for your response to God's outpouring heart, the appeal to your emotion. Finally, I challenge you to a new type of life in Christ, the appeal to your will. They're all part of our religious experience. They simply vary in point of emphasis in our personal make-up.

"In fact, the total program of the church is geared to meet these three major elements. All of our church schools—Sunday, weekday, vacation—are built upon the basic principle that Jesus reaches kiddies and adults through religious education of the intellect. Beautiful music and lovely liturgy have a direct appeal upon one's emotions. The total service program and stewardship challenge of the church is a dedication of the will.

"The fact is, Joe, that all three play a pivotal part in the life of every Christian. Indeed, it may be difficult for you to decide which dominates in your own per-

sonality. Faithful listening to God's preached Word may lead you to think that Jesus reaches you through intellect. Then, again, as you come before God's altar for the Holy Sacrament, the deep stirrings of your heart tell you that emotion may take first place. But suddenly in dedication, you decide to tithe, and will seems to win the day. The truth is, that all three may alternate in prominence in your life repeatedly.

"He may manifest the same variety, Joe, with respect to 'the when' in your life. For example, you have welcomed Jesus as Lord as far back as you can remember. Yet, last summer you had a unique pulsating experience one night at church camp. Both of these are true for you: The long-distance hold and the sudden touch!

"Actually, Joe, Jesus seems to employ every possible way, to possess you completely. He does this with others as well. So we need not be overly concerned whether we fit into their pattern or they fit into ours. Rather, our chief concern should be that we and they truly walk with him. Then we're his and he is ours. We're on the roadway to heaven!

"The truth of the matter is," he added with twinkling eye, "your fanatical buddy friend felt he was saved because he tried to make a deal with God. He gave God a little bit of righteousness for a big bit of heaven. God doesn't work that way. We have salvation because it is a gift from God. God gives us his heart and his heaven. We walk with him in Jesus. We're friends! Now and forever!"

"Joe," he said as he crawled into his Pontiac, "read Jesus' story about the Father of Prodigal Love! You'll find it in Luke 15."

### And Joe understands . . .

Turning around, Joe hurried home and grabbed his Bible once again. Sprawling across the bed, he thumbed the pages to Luke 15. As he read, his mind soon fashioned vivid pictures of the worst possible son, one who grabs all that's coming to him, who spends it in the wickedest ways, who ends up the most

miserable wretch. Sounds as though Jesus is talking about me, Joe mused.

Then the picture changed abruptly. Joe visualized a kindly father engaged in an endless watch toward the horizon. After the thousandth day he detects a tiny speck in the far distance. Sensing a familiar swing to the distant walk, he rushes out across the rolling terrain to meet him. He throws his arms about his wayward son in lavish love. He leads him back tenderly to the homestead. He seats him at the table before a high feast in his honor. He places upon the finger of the sobbing boy the gold ring of official sonship. "Seems that Jesus wants me to understand," observed Joe, "that God is this magnificent Father of Prodigal Love!"

Joe rose from his bed deeply moved. His thoughts rushed to Luther's striking translation of the Hebrew "Amen" in the catechism. He had a new answer for the strange fellow on the bus. He had a new answer for anyone who inquired whether he was a child of Christ. In Luther's words, his answer was: "This is most certainly true!"

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

The topic can be presented in a variety of ways. The leader can present it "solo" as the experience of Joe in the story, or can substitute himself for Joe as the central character. Very readily, too, it can be presented in dramatic form, with individuals taking the rolls of Joe, Dad, school professor, etc.

In the open discussion that follows you may wish to have a panel of experts seated at table before the group. They might be tagged with cards as Mr. Intellect, Mr. Emotion, Mr. Will. They can take the initiative in trying to show why each one in turn takes primary place in the Christian experience. Or the group can fire questions at them through a moderator. A combination of presentation and questioning might be wise.

You may wish to try a thoroughly sane and sound witness session. Have members of your group speak, round-robin style for a minute or three, on "How Christ has come into my life." Likely it would involve some very simple but impressive stories of devout family life, a confirmation experience, a week at church camp, and the like. There should be no timidity about this. If there is, sheets of paper can be distributed whereon they can write a paragraph on the subject without signature.

Or you may wish to analyze your local church's program with respect to its varied appeal to the membership's head-heart-hand. Does your church reach out into the unchurched of the community with appeal to their intellect, feeling, will?

## WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

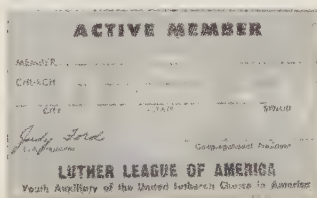
An excellent service is that of Personal Rededication, number IX, page 329f, in the *Christian Youth Hymnal*. Some of the suitable collects in the same hymnal are numbers 13, 14, 42, 44, 46, 49, and 52.

## DISCUSSION

Are converted people strange? Are unconverted people spiritually dead? If you've always been reared in a Christian home and have never had an emotional religious experience, can you still be a true Christian? Do those who have been "converted" have any special tendency to fall away? To be radical? To be severe?

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# BEFORE DAWN

an Easter topic



by CHARLES COATES

## Hymn "The Day of Resurrection" (43 CYH)

*While the soldiers were casting lots, Jesus' mother was standing near the cross with her sister, Mary, Clopas' daughter, and Mary of Magdala. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom He loved standing by her side, and said to her, "Look, he will be your son." And then He said to the disciple, "And she is to be your mother."*

*From that hour His disciple led Mary to his own home.*

*After this, Jesus, realizing that everything was now completed, said (fulfilling the saying of Scripture), "I am thirsty."*

*There was a bowl of sour wine standing there. So they soaked a sponge in the wine, put it on a spear, and pushed it up towards his mouth. When Jesus had taken it, He cried, "It is finished!" His head fell forward, and He died.*

*After it was all over, Joseph (who came from Arimathaea and was a disciple of Jesus, though secretly for fear of the Jews) requested Pilate that he might take away Jesus' body, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took His body down. Nicodemus also, the one who had*



*come to Him at the beginning by night, arrived bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. So they took His body and wound it round with linen strips with the spices, according to the Jewish custom of preparing a body for burial. It happened that on the same hillside where He was crucified, there was a garden containing a new tomb in which nobody had yet been laid. Because it was the Preparation Day and because the tomb was conveniently near, they laid Jesus in this tomb.*

**John 19: 25-30; 38-42 (Phillips translation)**

It was all over. The sky was actually lighter than it had been. They had stayed with him to the end. They had watched while his body was taken from the cross and wrapped in linen strips. And they had gone along to the tomb in Joseph's garden. That was all they could do until after the Sabbath. Besides, what more could anyone do, except prepare spices and perfumes?

John, beloved of his Master, placed his strong arm gently around the frail figure of Mary and led her down the stony path. He was taking her home with him as he had promised. He would care for her as his own mother, according to the wish of his dying Master.

John took his new mother home and left her in the care of her sister and Salome, the wife of Zebedee. As was the custom, a crowd of other women had gathered at the home to mourn with her. All that night and the next day the mourning continued.

But at dusk, when the Sabbath was over, Mary slipped away from the others and made her way to the flat rooftop. They saw her go, and John was watching. But they respected her need to be alone.

She sat there for a long time, her shoulders bowed, her hands clasped in her lap, while one by one the lights of the town were turned out below her. While the world slept she sat alone in the darkness under the stars.

She would have liked to go home but she knew to ask would distress her friends. Anyway, John would want to go to the tomb as soon as it was light. He would want to get in touch with the other disciples.

She thought longingly of the time when she could step across the threshold of the little house in Nazareth. She would close the door—at least for a little while—and light the small oil lamp and place it in its niche in the wall. And the flickering light from the cotton wick would awaken from the shadows the strayed memories of normal daily living.

It was to this house they had come, she and Joseph, bringing the child from Egypt. There she had lifted him in her arms to grasp with his tiny hand the sacred name attached to the doorpost, and had taught him to kiss the fingers that had touched the holy name of God. It was there his child's lips had first formed the words of the Shemah: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God." And it was there he had learned the holy ritual of breaking bread, when Joseph as priest of the household had repeated over the coarse barley loaf: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Who has brought forth bread from the ground."

So long as she lived, that little home in Nazareth would be her comfort, because it housed the carpenter shop where Joseph's strength and

peace still lingered like a silent psalm. She could touch the tools so worn from the pressure of his fingers and the fingers of the Son who had carried on his trade.

The horror that had numbed her body and mind was beginning to lift now. The things that he had said, and John had repeated over and over, began to come back to her. She spoke them softly—"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." She sat quiet and relaxed, her eyes closed.

Mary heard nothing. But a soft radiance penetrated her eyelids. It seemed to her as if he were there beside her, himself repeating the words. She suddenly remembered in vivid detail the wonderful promise of his birth. It was thirty-odd years now. But she could never forget the awesome messenger who came one night bearing news of a Child to be born—to her. And the other strange and wonderful happenings when he was born. It was a sacred privilege to have been chosen. How she had pondered these things!

The wonder had dimmed as he got older and the other children came. But the memory was always sweet. She thought of the secrets of childhood they shared together, the gifts of flowers—especially the little bouquet arranged in the basket he had made.

She seemed to hear his voice. It was quieting her, comforting her. Was it not his hand that touched hers!

That instant she remembered the sparrow with the broken wing. He had found it after the village boys had stoned it and had dressed its wound. It was his sixth birthday. They were poor that year and had no gifts for him. He accepted the wounded bird as his birthday gift. He kept the bird a long time and it became so tame it would come to him when he held out his hand. Even after it was healed it stayed nearby for a long while.

Retracing the vivid years, Mary remembered how the old wonder had returned when he prepared to leave home. She knew the time had come that day in the synagogue. It, too, was a day of remembrance. There she had lost him to his mission and the world.

That memory brought her haltingly to the events of the day. She had been out there. She had witnessed the terrible truth of his death. Yet as she sat there, it seemed not to matter. He was not gone. She raised her eyes as the first streak of dawn appeared in the east. He was there. His Presence had comforted and sustained her. It was he who had taken her back across the years. He held her hands in his while he spoke—"Peace I leave with you . . ."

The sun had not risen yet but the sky held promise of sunlight. Below, in the shadowed streets, she could hear the voices of the women starting for the tomb with their baskets of fine linen and ointments. She did not call to them nor join them.

She knew the tomb was empty.

*On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel; and as they were*

*frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise." And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.*

Luke 24:1-9 (RSV)

Hymn "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" (41 CYH)

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

Easter is a joyous and sacred season in our church year when the central fact of our faith is uppermost in our minds. Our programs at this time should not be concerned with eggs, lilies, or women's hats, but with that central fact. And the message of Easter is properly approached in a worshipful attitude.

The material in this article is devotional in nature and should be used in a devotional

setting. It is best suited as an Easter Eve program, perhaps as a devotional prelude before the group goes caroling.

The story and the Scripture lessons should be read by people in the group who read well. The story should not be dramatized, panelized, or pantomimed. It is most effective when read as a meditation.

The hymns and surrounding Biblical passages are merely suggestions. You may wish to substitute, delete or expand.

## SELF-DENIAL—

*(Continued from page 21)*

Do you agree that there should be a fresh approach to the idea of self-denial during Lent? Should a league give up all social activities during Lent? Is it "wrong" for a league to be involved in service projects during this season?

What is the value of giving up material things (candy, gum, ice cream, etc.)? What ideas does your group have for giving Lent a new and vital meaning? What devotional books or recordings would you suggest for Lenten meditation?

\*"The Hand of God" a new Kerry Hi-Fi recording of sacred music, features Tony Santane and the choir of a ULCA mission. Resurrection, Canoga Park, Calif.)

## HOMES—

*(Continued from page 31)*

Use heavy tagboard or cardboard for a three-panel design. Give it a stained glass look by using cellophane and use black ink to help set off the design of pictures or symbols; f) select Bible-centered hymns and compare with Bible reference which inspired the writing of that particular hymn. Examples are: "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past" (Psalm 90) and "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" (Psalm 23).

Buzz Groups: a) suggest various outlines for family worship services; b) suggest aids for family worship, especially some table or buffet arrangements that go with a special season of the Church year.

## DISCUSSION

What are some of the reasons people use for not having family worship? What are advantages and disadvantages of family worship? Who would like to share some of their family worship ideas? What would you do about your devotions if visitors are in your home?

## BEGINNING—

*(Continued from page 34)*

## PRESENTATION POINTERS

We can not explore much of Genesis in one or two short Bible studies, but we can start.

The true-false questions are designed to stimulate interest, whether this study is used as a private venture or as a group topic. A person leading a topic based on this article should be able to use the guide questions to good advantage. It should be relatively easy to stimulate interest. An important part of such a topic will be to get everyone to open his Bible and look up the suggested material. The questions for discussion at the end of the article may also prove stimulating.

## DISCUSSION

Our interpretation is different from the Hebrew's world in many ways. God is no longer "up." Where is God today?

What does the writer of the Gospel of John mean when he says that "God is a spirit?" In what ways does God continue to create?



# Echoes

Advisors and league officers: do you have the latest fliers and pamphlets from the Luther League of America? Write for a free order blank to discover what has been published since you received your last order. Plan to keep up-to-date in the new year. Keep your officers on the ball.

Here are several suggestions for activities in the coming winter months. Consult the last issue Echoes for details to check before your project night.

## JANUARY

1. They say everything that goes up must come down. This is true of Christmas decorations, also. Help de-decorate the church and social rooms.

2. The New Year is a good time to sit down and evaluate your program. What have you accomplished? Where do your faults lie? What do you want to accomplish in the coming months? Don't be afraid to tear your league apart—just so you come up with some fruitful ideas for improvement.

3. Clean up your meeting room—clean out closets and cupboards, wash walls or windows, wash curtains, etc. Perhaps some fresh paint will help.

4. Make a series of posters on the five divisions of the Luther League. Place these on a bulletin board in the narthex for the congregation to see.

5. Bring your HIGH IDEALS and *Luther Life* index up to date for 1958. Perhaps you could indicate with checkmarks in the index which issues you have in your file.

6. If you don't have one already, begin a file on worship materials. Clip and file poems, stories, etc.

7. Help elderly people in your congregation, or the sick, by shoveling snow, running errands and doing weekly shopping for them.

8. Have a project for the pre-school department. Fix toys, replace some. Make coloring books and other toys.

9. Plan to mimeograph a monthly

league or congregational newspaper or newsletter. This will help promote your league work.

## FEBRUARY

1. Plan a family night program. You may use one of the topics in this issue. Play games and serve refreshments—or have a project in which everyone can join.

2. Have a Valentine party for children at the local settlement or neighborhood house.

3. Write to the college students of your congregation.

4. Prepare Lenten devotional books for your members. Give suggestions of scripture. Write prayers or give prayer suggestions. Write poems or verses of hymns.

5. Have Lenten Bible study groups. Keep the groups small and meet in the homes of your members.

6. Plan Lenten prayer groups. Meet in homes and keep the groups quite small.

7. Prepare prayer calendars for your leaguers.

8. Prepare an Easter pageant for the congregation.

9. Attend the special Lenten services as a group.

10. Help in special services by ushering, taking the offering, etc.

## MARCH

1. Have some kind of a project to aid in family worship. Make small altars, crosses, a triptych, altar cloth, etc.

2. Write letters to the men in the service. You may want to get together to bake cookies to send to them.

3. Plan a visitation program with your pastor. You may call on league members or adults. Many people stop coming to church after Easter. Use this as your approach.

4. Make Easter favors for hospital trays.

5. Plan your program for the year.

6. Go Easter caroling.

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# *Coming Attractions*

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Life of Christ

Chronology of the Bible

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Whitsunday

Summer dating

School for lay workers

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